

Weekend FINANCIAL TIMES

Weekend FT
Evangelists on the
radio talk show

SECTION II

World Business Newspaper

WEEKEND APRIL 6/APRIL 7/APRIL 8 1996

Raincoats make
a splash

Slaughter of
the fattened pig

Japan Tobacco to face first damages suit from smokers

The first lawsuit brought by smokers against Japan Tobacco, the state-owned company that dominates the country's cigarette market, has been launched this week. The action by five Japanese - four smokers and one non-smoker - has created new concerns for JT and for the finance ministry, which had hoped to bolster state revenues by selling much of its 51 per cent stake later this year. Page 22

Zhirinovskiy joins Russian presidency race
Liberal Democratic party leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy has announced he will run for the Russian presidency in June. The 49-year-old ultra-nationalist is the third candidate registered after Communist party chief Gennady Zyuganov and President Boris Yeltsin. Trading Issues, Page 3

Takeover rumours lift UK market trading

FT-SE 100 index
At the close of a busy trading session, the last of the old tax year, the FT-SE 100 index posted a 30.5 gain at 3,755.6, leaving it only 26.7 below its all-time closing peak and 36.5 below its record intraday high. Over a week which has seen the stock market buzzing with takeover rumours, the index has climbed 55.9 points or 1.5 per cent. Dealers said they expect the London market to attract a flurry of programme trade activity next week when the big investment institutions begin to invest their second quarter new asset allocations and shift their existing portfolios. Page 19: World Stocks, Page 17

Faulty Aids test causes anguish in Europe
Thousands of people who were cleared of having the HIV virus that causes Aids will face new checks after the withdrawal of a test kit found to be unreliable. The UK Department of Health said a "small proportion" were falsely given negative results in the test manufactured by Chicago-based drug company Abbott Laboratories and 40,000 would have to be retested. Dutch authorities said 50,000 Dutch people would need to be retested.

Santer champions EU on eastern missions
Jacques Santer, European Commission president, has urged a "step-by-step" approach to the Czech Republic and Hungary, promising assistance for the European Union. Both countries have applied to join the EU. Page 2

Frenchman dies of CJD: A single case of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) comparable to those which sparked the recent "mad cow" crisis in Britain has been reported in France. The case involved a 29-year-old man in Lyon, central France, who died in January. Beef crisis, Page 4

Fokker, the bankrupt Dutch aircraft maker, said that Saab of Sweden and Samsung of South Korea had discussed making a joint approach for the company, but that they failed to reach agreement and ultimately decided not to bid. Page 5

BET claims "dirty tactics" by Rentokil: BET, the business services group fighting a £1.9bn (£2.6bn) takeover bid by Rentokil, has complained to the Takeover Panel in Britain over what it claims are dirty tactics by its rival. Page 6

UK stops ostrich farming schemes: British ostrich farmers offered homes to thousands of birds stranded in Belgium after the UK government's closure of an investment company. Page 22

Rever, the UK subsidiary of Germany's BMW motor vehicle group, has decided to close its recently opened car assembly plant at Varna, on Bulgaria's Black Sea coast. Page 2

Thomson-CSF of France and GEC-Marconi of the UK are to pool their sonar activities in a joint company which, with a FF2.7bn (£333m) turnover and 3,500 employees, will be the second largest supplier of underwater listening devices after Lockheed Martin of the US. Page 5

The Financial Times will not be published on Easter Monday, but will resume normal publication on Tuesday.

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US jobs rise signals firm growth

By Michael Prowse
in Washington
and Lisa Granstein in New York

Official figures confirming that the US economy is becoming more robust after a period of sluggish growth prompted sharp falls in bond prices yesterday in a truncated holiday trading session.

The Labour Department said non-farm payroll employment rose 140,000 last month against economists' projections of a gain of only about 60,000. The increase was significant because it followed a revised 624,000 gain in employment in February - the largest for 12 years.

Some analysts had dismissed the February report as an aberration and predicted very weak figures for March. The solid gain last month, following other evidence of a rebound, indicates the US economy is on course for sustained growth at an annual rate of about 2 per cent.

Figures spark bond price fall as prospect of rate cut fades

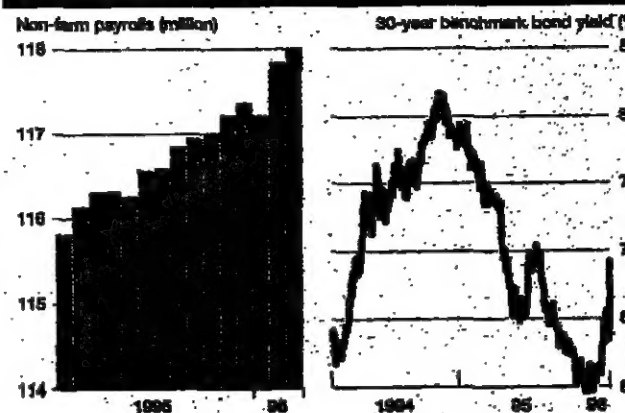
The jobs rate edged up to 5.6 per cent from 5.5 per cent in February, but remained well below the 5.8 per cent rate in January. Bond prices tumbled on Wall Street as the strong figures reinforced a growing conviction that the Federal Reserve - the US central bank - will not cut short-term interest rates again in this economic cycle. Some economists now suggest that rate increases may be needed later this year if the economy continues to gain momentum.

In a shortened trading session, the benchmark 30-year bond lost 1/8 to end at 88 1/2, and its yield rose to 6.84 per cent from 6.66 per cent at Thursday's close. Shorter-dated securities were even harder hit, reflecting the pessimism about further rate cuts. The stock market was closed for the Good Friday holiday.

"Our economy has weathered the slow patch of late last year and shaken off any lingering effects of the government shut-downs and the January blizzards," said Mr Joseph Stiglitz, the chief White House economist. He predicted sustainable growth this year in line with the Clinton administration's forecast of a 2.2 per cent gain in gross domestic product.

Mr John Lipsky, chief economist at Salomon Brothers in New York, said the data indicated the economy had shifted from deceleration to acceleration. But it was too early to judge whether this would lead to above-trend growth and upward pressure on inflation.

US employment figures hit bonds



On Wall Street, bond traders grumbled about being in the office on the holiday. "I think it's a tribute to Mammone," said Mr William Shea, a vice-president at Nikko Securities in New York.

But others said a special trading session was necessary given the significance of the jobs

Continued on Page 22
Bonds, Page 22

Deutsche Bank lures high-tech team for US move

By Richard Waters
in New York

Deutsche Bank has hired the key figures behind Morgan Stanley's high-tech banking group, a move which represents one of the biggest coups yet by a European bank trying to break into the investment banking business in the US.

The three people, led by Mr Frank Quattrone, have been in the forefront of what has proved the hottest part of the market for initial public offerings in the US in recent months, bringing a string of high-tech companies to Wall Street.

Like a number of other European banks, Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, the investment banking arm of the German bank, has set its sights on building a US operation by luring established bankers from Wall Street firms, rather than buying a bank outright.

A small group of San Francisco-based banks has risen to prominence on the wave of public financings for high-tech companies, among them Hambrecht & Quist, Robertson Stephens and Montgomery Securities.

To buy one of these institutions would be likely to cost more than \$250m, with some putting the price of a bank like H&Q at as much as \$600m.

While refusing to comment on the possible price for such an acquisition, Mr Carter McLelland, president of Deutsche Bank North America, said: "It's very expensive, relative to what this costs us."

Along with Mr George Boutsos and Mr Bill Brady, who are also moving to Deutsche Bank, Mr Quattrone will run a new, global high-tech banking group with a presence in Asia and Europe, Mr McLelland said.

The Deutsche Bank executive is himself a former Morgan Stanley banker, and worked closely with Mr Quattrone while running its investment banking operations in California in the mid-1980s.

Among companies Mr Quattrone's team have brought to the stock market is Netscape, the most successful in a range of Internet stocks, which Morgan Stanley advised alongside local bank H&Q.

The group's revenues at Morgan Stanley were evenly divided between initial public offerings, mergers and acquisitions advice

Continued on Page 22



President Bill Clinton and his wife Hillary shovel earth around a blossoming white dogwood tree in a planting ceremony at the White House to honour US commerce secretary Ron Brown and the 34 others who died in an air crash near Dubrovnik, Croatia, on Wednesday. Picture: Reuters

Fresh setback for Cunard as cruise liner hits coral reef

By Clay Harris in London
and Agencies

The Cunard liner Royal Viking Sun, crippled when it struck a coral reef on Thursday night, was towed into the Egyptian Red Sea port of Sharm el-Sheikh last night.

Cunard said the 560 passengers had disembarked to await charter flights home. For 11 of them, it was the second premature end to a Cunard cruise in five weeks. They had been transferred from the Sagaford in February after a fire broke out in a generator room in the South China Sea.

In Cunard's latest misadventure, the Royal Viking Sun was sailing north into the Gulf of Aqaba on its way to Jordan when it struck a reef in the Strait of Tiran and began to take on water. Jordanians and Egyptian tugs towed it to Sharm el-Sheikh.

Cunard said the damaged area had been isolated and any water inside the ship had been pumped out. The company said it was too early to discuss the level of compensation. "Cunard historically has been fairly generous," it said.

The cruise began in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in January,

and was to have ended at the same port in April 23.

The UK cruise line's future is uncertain because its parent company, Trafalgar House, is in the process of being bought by Kvaerner, the Norwegian engineering and shipping group. The takeover is due to be declared unconditional on April 18. Kvaerner has not yet announced its intentions about Cunard.

The Gulf of Aqaba incident is the third misfortune to befall a Cunard liner in less than two years. Apart from the Sagaford fire, passengers on the QE2 complained in December 1994 that extensive refurbishments continued during a voyage to New York. They were awarded damages by a US court.

Lloyd's of London shipping intelligence unit said the cruise ship began taking on water and listing after hitting something underwater. Pumps expelled the water and put the ship back on an even keel, it said.

The office of General Sanaa Kamal, head of Red Sea port operations, said Egyptian navy vessels and a search and rescue squad were dispatched during the rescue.

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Ceiling put on cost of lamb and other food products as worries about inflation increase

Athens fears indigestion over Easter prices

By Karin Hope in Athens

Greece's trade ministry has set price ceilings for lamb and other food products to keep down the cost of the traditional meat for tomorrow week's Orthodox Easter - a whole spit-roasted lamb and a large basket of red-dyed eggs.

Fears that domestic health controls may be inadequate have added an extra dimension to Greek worries about the soaring price of the Easter feast on Sunday April 14.

Lamb prices increased by 50 per cent last month after poultry and beef sales collapsed because of worries about salmonella infection and BSE -

mad cow disease. Greek households consume an estimated 1m lambs at Easter, while egg sales rise tenfold, according to retailers' associations.

Mr Michalis Chrysohoidis, trade minister, said policing of several thousand outlets for meat and vegetables in the Athens area would be stepped up during Easter week. Import restrictions on lamb and fresh produce are being temporarily lifted "to keep prices at acceptable levels for the holidays."

The measures are also intended to a help curb inflation, which is causing concern among budget planners. Government officials are delaying announcing the March inflation figures, but independent analysts said inflation was likely to jump to an annual rate of 8.5 per cent from 8.5 per cent in February - more than three times the EU average.

A surge in food prices, which make up almost 30 per cent of Greece's consumer price basket for calculating inflation, is blamed for the accelerating inflation rate.

Mrs Anastasia Mavrikis, shopping at the central meat market in Athens yesterday, said: "I'm looking hard at the stamps on the meat to make sure it's local produce, but after what's being going on in the past few weeks it is difficult to trust what you see."

The Athens poultry market was hit by the collapse last week of a large producer, Vokas, which is suspected of selling thousands of chickens infected with salmonella to other poultry farmers before going out of business. There are fears, too, that some of the 35,000 chickens abandoned at the company's premises outside Athens may have reached the market.

Sales of beef have fallen by more than 60 per cent since Greek market inspectors seized at least 60 tonnes of British beef during raids on cold storage facilities around Athens. Greece imports only small quantities of beef from Britain, but seizures of undeclared meat have fuelled Greek concern about BSE.

However, Greece's state veterinary service yesterday called off a week-long strike after only 24 hours when the government gave in to their demand for "danger money". The walk-out had prompted fears that illegal lamb imports would rise sharply, exposing consumers to further health risks.

Mr Theodoros Ananiadis, who heads the veterinarians' union, said: "We deserve parity with other state services, like the forest fire service, who get paid for working in hazardous conditions."

The veterinarians are usually on call around the clock in the run-up to Easter to prevent illegally slaughtered lamb reaching the market. In border areas they must check shipments of lamb suspected of being smuggled from other Balkan countries.

Customs officials say an illegal trade in livestock from Albania and Bulgaria, where veterinary controls are weak, expands just before Easter, with thousands of lambs being driven across the border at night.

They are immediately processed at slaughter-houses in northern Greece and sold to wholesalers as Greek produce.

The governor of the Yugoslav National Bank has blamed his own government for blocking rump Yugoslavia's membership of the International Monetary Fund.

Mr Dragoslav Avramovic said that an argument over whether Yugoslavia - now comprising only Serbia and Montenegro - was named as the sole successor to the former communist federation of six republics or one of five successor states stymied negotiations last week in Paris with the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation and the IMF.

Mr Avramovic said the IMF would offer membership and support, with no political conditions, if Belgrade signed as a successor state.

President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia claims Yugoslavia never ceased to exist, as Slovenia and Croatia seceded illegally in June 1991.

In 1991 Belgrade accepted a formula for the division of the country's assets and liabilities which gave 35.5 per cent to Serbia and Montenegro. It is estimated about \$2.5m of gold and hard currency assets of former Yugoslavia are frozen around the world.

But Belgrade last month reversed its position, with a view to securing its claim to be sole successor state. It started legal action in the High Court in London to block a deal between Slovenia and the London Club of commercial banks which would have enabled Slovenia to start paying its share (18 per cent) of the total \$4.2bn of former Yugoslav debt.

Mr Avramovic criticised the legal action, saying he hoped it could be resolved in meetings next week in the US. "We should get the Slovenia problem off the agenda and solve it among ourselves."

With the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1991, Serbia lost its membership in all international organisations. Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia - the other four republics - have since been admitted.

Until last year Belgrade was subjected to UN sanctions over the violent partition of Bosnia. By endorsing the Dayton peace agreement in November, Mr Milosevic opened the way for restoring Yugoslavia to the international community.

Mr Avramovic said Yugoslavia owed \$104m to the IMF, \$1.75bn to the World Bank and \$11.5m to the IFC. "We could receive a new loan before repaying the old ones," he said. "But, if we do not join, we won't get anything."

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS DIGEST

Daimler chiefs in profits probe

The Stuttgart public prosecutor is investigating several managers and members of the supervisory board of Daimler-Benz for possible infringements against the law governing public limited companies.

The prosecutor's office confirmed yesterday it was following up complaints from a shareholders' group against Mr Edzard Reuter, Daimler's former managing board chairman; Mr Jürgen Schrempf, present chairman of Daimler-Benz; and Mr Hilmar Kopper, head of the Daimler supervisory board and chairman of Deutsche Bank.

In February Mr Jochen Knoesel, a representative of the Würzburg association for the promotion of shareholder democracy, filed a suit against the three managers alleging they had deliberately presented a false picture of Daimler's profit position last year.

Incorrect presentation of a company's position by its top management can be punished by up to three years in jail. The umb of the shareholders' complaint was that early last year Mr Reuter forecast a rising net profit for 1995. A few weeks later Mr Schrempf predicted a loss of DM1.5bn (\$1bn). This week Daimler disclosed that the 1995 loss amounted to DM5.7bn.

The Daimler-Benz group, which in February said it was untroubled by the shareholders' move, did not comment on the latest development.

Peter Norman, Bonn

Daiwa manager pleads guilty

The manager of Daiwa Bank's New York branch pleaded guilty on Thursday to one charge of helping to hide the \$1.1bn of losses run up by one of the bank's traders. In comments made in court in New York, he suggested that officials of Japan's ministry of finance had put pressure on the bank not to disclose the losses to the US authorities earlier.

The plea agreement follows Daiwa's decision last month to plead guilty to charges over the cover-up, and to pay a fine of \$340m. The trader, Mr Toshio Iguchi, also reached a plea agreement and is due to be sentenced on April 15.

Mr Masahiro Tsuda, the only other bank official named in US charges, said in court he had been under orders from his superiors in Japan not to disclose the trading losses to the US authorities immediately. Also, he said, ministry of finance officials had warned him that to reveal the losses earlier "would be disastrous for the Japanese economy".

Mr Iguchi revealed the losses to Daiwa executives in July last year but they were not disclosed to the US banking regulators until September.

Richard Waters, New York

Belgian ex-minister sentenced

Mr Guy Coe, former Belgian defence minister, and seven associates were yesterday found guilty of fraud and abuse of public office.

Mr Coe was given a two-year suspended jail sentence and ordered to repay sums he illegally received from a political research company. He was also stripped of his civil and political rights for five years, throwing into question his position as an MP and mayor of the town of Waremmes. The other defendants were given suspended sentences. Mr Coe said he would appeal to the European Court of Human Rights.

Mr Coe, defence minister in 1988, is also implicated in an inquiry into kickbacks said to have been paid by Agusta of Italy to Belgium's French- and Dutch-speaking socialist parties to secure an order for 46 helicopters. The inquiry forced Mr Coe to quit the government in 1994.

Reuter, Brussels

Arms control talks break down

Talks in Vienna aimed at establishing a new regime to limit the supply of arms and military technology to "pagan" regimes have broken down after disagreements between the US and Russia.

The breakdown of the talks, grouping 31 western and former communist nations, was a blow to US hopes of curbing the military ambitions of such countries as Libya, Iran, Iraq, Cuba and North Korea. Negotiations will resume in July.

Russia, an established supplier of arms to all those countries, agreed last December to join a new military technology regime whose members would swap information about exports of weapons and "dual-use" equipment. The new regime is intended to be a successor to CoCom, the cold-war arrangement by which western countries sought to avoid exporting anything that could enhance the technology of their adversaries.

However, both Russia and France are wary of the latest US efforts to regulate the international arms market, arguing that Washington may simply be trying to consolidate its commercial position.

Bruce Clark, Diplomatic Correspondent

Bonino caught in Somali fighting

A top European official was caught up in two shooting incidents in south-east Somalia yesterday as clan fighting raged in the city of Kismayo. At least 75 people were reported killed. A convoy in which Ms Emma Bonino, European commissioner for humanitarian affairs, was travelling was twice forced to stop when militia escorts opened fire against a smaller rival group. The Italian politician and her party, in Somalia to review relief efforts funded by the EU, left Kismayo aboard a Belgian air force transport aircraft.

At least 40 militiamen and 35 civilians were killed in the intra-clan warfare which erupted suddenly in the city on Thursday and continued yesterday.

Reuter, Kismayo

Liquidators at Latvian bank

Latvia's central bank has called in the liquidators at Bank Baltija after reconstruction plans for the biggest bank in the Baltic region broke down. It is believed the bank owes 150,000 creditors more than \$400m. Its collapse briefly threatened to undermine the financial system. About 20 per cent of Latvia's citizens had an account at Baltija, as well as 20,000 companies.

Deloitte & Touche, the international accounting firm which helped trace the assets of the failed BCCI bank, is to investigate the causes of Baltija's failure and salvage what assets it can. Latvia has recently adopted new bankruptcy laws to enable failed financial institutions to be more effectively liquidated.

John Thornhill, Moscow

Tokyo set to lift telecoms curbs

The Japanese government has announced it is ready to lift restrictions on foreign participation in the country's telecommunications sector.

The decision comes ahead of a month-end deadline for completion of negotiations by the World Trade Organisation's group on telecommunications. Mr Ichiro Hino, Japan's minister of posts and telecommunications, said: "I believe Japan should play a major role to ensure that these negotiations are brought to a successful conclusion."

He said it was time Japan increased transparency in the sector, adding that Tokyo would lift restrictions currently limiting foreign ownership and foreign board members to no more than a third of the total in telecommunications businesses on condition that other leading countries also liberalised their markets.

Emiko Terazono, Tokyo

German slowdown continues

The German economy slowed further in February, according to preliminary figures released by the economics ministry which showed a 1.6 per cent drop in industrial production from a month earlier. More reliable statistics, which compared January and February with the two previous months, showed a 1 per cent fall in industrial production, the ministry said. The construction sector was hardest hit, with production falling 8.5 per cent, in part because of the bitter winter.

Hopes for a recovery were dented by a report from the Ifo economics institute which showed companies were planning further production cuts. The institute forecast that industrial production would fall by about 2 per cent this year compared with 1995.

Michael Lindemann, Bonn

Russian war of words inflames poll passions

By John Thornhill in Moscow

Russia's presidential election yesterday burst into life with a slanging match between the leading candidates after President Boris Yeltsin suggested some of his Communist opponents should be in jail.

Communist leaders reacted angrily to a statement by Mr Yeltsin, campaigning in the southern town of Belgorod, on Thursday that it was "an outrage" that three prominent leftwing deputies, who supported the hardline Communist coup in 1991, should be in parliament.

"They should all be sitting in another place, say the Solovki Reet [prison]," said Mr Yeltsin.

Mr Gennady Zyuganov, the Communist party presidential candidate, who is leading the opinion polls, yesterday denounced Mr Yeltsin's "unprecedented slur".

Mr Zyuganov said the president's attitude showed his contempt for the Russian constitution, which was his own "brainchild". He pointed out that one of the three - Mr Nikolai Rykhov, the former Soviet prime minister - had been elected in the Belgorod region with 65 per cent of the vote.

Mr Rykhov, who heads the leftist Popular Rule movement, is playing a leading part in Mr Zyuganov's election campaign ahead of the June 16 poll. He demanded an apology from Mr Yeltsin for his comments which "bordered on threats".

"Apparently, I am going to be put in prison for once being the head of a great government - the USSR," Mr Rykhov said.

Mr Yeltsin, who came to power in 1991 after facing down the hardline coup, has been contrasting his own "moderation" with the



Ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy displays his candidate's certificate yesterday, showing he is officially registered as a candidate in June's presidential election

"extremist" policies pursued by the Communists. Yet, ironically, he has also promised to implement many of the populist policies advocated by Mr Zyuganov.

The latest opinion polls suggest that Mr Yeltsin's campaign, which receives blanket coverage on television, may be working and that he has almost closed the gap on Mr Zyuganov.

Russia's moribund stock

market has also shown signs of life this week as foreign investors appear to be growing more confident of a Yeltsin victory.

But the continued fighting in the breakaway region of Chechnya still dogs Mr Yeltsin's campaign.

The Interfax news agency reported that 30 Russian soldiers had been killed in recent fighting near the southern village of Golskoye despite Mr Yeltsin's declaration of a unilateral ceasefire last Sunday.

Mr Yeltsin's plans to visit China on April 24 also received a setback yesterday after the head of the Russian delegation trying to settle outstanding border disputes resigned.

General Valery Rozov said Moscow's plans to give up lands around the Tumen river, south of Vladivostok, giving China access to the Sea of Japan ran against Russia's national interests.

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Santer champions EU on his eastern mission

By Vincent Boland in Prague and Kester Eddy in Budapest

Mr Jacques Santer, European Commission president, yesterday completed a fact-finding trip to the Czech Republic and Hungary, preaching enthusiasm for the European Union. Both countries have applied to join the EU.

In Prague he chided Czechs for what he suggested was an excessively hard-headed approach to membership, while praising their efforts to meet the EU's entry requirements. In Budapest he spoke in flowery terms of Hungary's place in "the architecture of Europe in the 21st century".

"I would like to think that your country's commitment to what we have achieved over several decades will show that the [EU] is attractive and appealing as well as necessary," he told a group of politicians and business executives in Prague.

"I trust that the Czech Republic will bring more than rational argument to bear in its desire to join Europe," he added, referring to the conviction among many Czechs that their place at the centre of Europe is not only natural but pre-ordained.

Many Czech business executives and bankers believe there is still much to be done to harmonise the economy with Europe before joining the EU, but others feel all that remains

is for the EU to provide a firm date for membership.

Impatience with the absence of such a firm date is coupled with a lingering suspicion that Brussels does not yet treat the Czech Republic as an equal. Surveys show that Czechs favour European "integration" but their attitudes to joining the EU are more cautious, with less than half actively supporting the idea.

"It won't help me much but it's a responsibility for the future"

Czech politicians boast that the country currently meets four of the five criteria necessary to participate in economic and monetary union, thanks to thrifty fiscal management. The exception is inflation, which refuses to fall much below 8.5 per cent.

After a meeting with Mr Václav Klaus, Czech prime minister, Mr Santer said talks on expanding the EU to include countries from central and eastern Europe would be completed by the year 2000 if every applicant country were as ready as the Czech Republic. In Budapest, Mr Santer praised the Hungarian government's "consistent, firm attitude" and the "substantial results" it had achieved.

though he said more remained to be done. He implied that Hungary would be among the first countries to have its application for EU membership considered.

At a joint press conference with Mr Santer, Hungarian premier Gyula Horn backed the individual assessment of candidates for EU entry and said the provisional timetable for membership negotiations was important for maintaining foreign investors' confidence.

He said the government would launch a "communications programme" of publications, films and conferences to highlight the benefits of EU membership.

Such a programme may be timely in a country where, as one political consultant said, most people were uninformed as to what membership meant and that no one had any idea as to how it would affect their lives, apart from freedom of movement.

Outside the press conference, most people seemed to support EU entry. One pensioner said it was desirable in view of the "critical situation" which would arise if the communists won the June presidential election.

A taxi driver in a Lada reflected the common view of Hungary being central to Europe. "The sooner the better," he said. "It won't help me much but it's a responsibility for the future."

Rover to close Bulgarian plant after poor sales

By Anthony Robinson, recently in Varna

Rover, the UK subsidiary of Germany's BMW motor vehicle group, has decided to close its recently opened car assembly plant at Varna, on Bulgaria's Black Sea coast, citing a worse than expected economic climate and lack of support from the socialist government.

Mr Vincent Hamersley, a Rover official, said the plant would close at the end of May after selling only 200 of the 2,200 Maestro cars and vans imported in painted chassis form from its Cowlsey plant near Oxford in England and assembled in a converted diesel engine plant in Varna after a 22-day voyage.

Rover has spent \$30m on the project which was opened by President Zhelyu Zhelev in September.

The project - a joint venture with the Daru group, which distributes BMW cars in Bulgaria and owns banks and insurance companies - was conceived as a flexible, low-cost plant capable of serving Bulgaria and export markets in the Black Sea region and beyond.

The deal took more than three years to put together and finally came into operation under a socialist administration elected in December 1994.

The new government, headed by Mr Zhan Videnov, did not feel obliged to fulfil earlier promises that the plant would benefit from tax advantages and substantial government orders. Rover was particularly incensed about a 10 per cent tax on its imported diesel engines.

In the meantime, Rover's local partner, Daru, which holds a 49 per cent stake in the venture, suffered financial difficulties. Last month the National Bank of Bulgaria took over the Daru-owned Vitoshka Bank for Agricultural Credit to protect depositors. The bank is one of dozens of loss-making Bulgarian banks facing closure or consolidation.

But local bankers believe Rover, which paid its 127-strong workforce 290-3100 a month to produce 105 cars a week, made two strategic mistakes. It introduced the wrong model, the obsolete Maestro, and charged too high a price for it.

There may be a market for cheap, old-fashioned cars in eastern Europe. But there is not a market for expensive, old-fashioned cars.

Lada, the Russian manufacturer of cheap Fiat and own-model cars, cut its already low prices on the Bulgarian market to fend off the expected competition from Rover.

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Hungary sold short by black market

Business has been brisk this week among the hundreds of vendors selling goods illegally in Budapest's many street markets, as Hungarians buy Easter eggs at a huge discount to prices in the shops.

Cuts in welfare payments and real wages last year mean that many poorer Hungarians depend on cheap purchases in the black market, helping to sustain the country's rampant black economy which is estimated at 30 per cent of gross domestic product.

A report commissioned by the prime minister's office found that purchases in the black market accounted for 17.5 per cent of the average family's total expenditure and about 9 per cent of food sales.

This is estimated to cost the state up to Ft100bn (\$690m) in lost taxes a year. UN customs

officers estimate smuggling is costing the cash-strapped state about half of potential customs and excise revenues.

Economists believe the parallel economy is also strong in the construction industry and in health: tips or bribes are often necessary to secure medical treatment, even though most healthcare is supposed to be free.

Other big problems are trademark and copyright abuse and counterfeiting.

Companies in all sectors of the economy are suspected of hiring labour illegally and of tax evasion. Many transactions go unrecorded in what is still a largely cash economy.

"What we really mean when we say the black economy accounts for 30 per cent of GDP is that companies work 70 per cent legally and 30 per cent illegally," says a Budapest law-

yer. "With this country's taxes and bureaucracy, no one would make any money otherwise."

After losing billions of forints in annual tax revenues for years and with the population increasingly sensitive to the sharp post-communist increase in crime, the government is attempting a high-profile crackdown on the black economy.

The campaign is popular with many Hungarians - confidence in the public sector has been rocked by corruption scandals involving state employees. After decades of enforced egalitarianism, many also resent the ostentatious entrepreneurial class that has emerged with the transition to a market economy.

Many have mixed feelings. A pensioner buying black market Easter eggs for his three grand-

children - "they are 30 or 40 per cent cheaper than in the shops, as are most things here", he says - also supports the clampdown on the black economy, partly because he was driven out of business as a fruit and vegetable producer by illegal traders who undercut his prices by not paying taxes.

"I know it's ridiculous but, despite everything that has happened, I still come here to buy groceries on the black market," he says. "I don't have any choice - it's the only way I can manage."

The business community argues that if state spending was cut further, then taxes could be lowered, encouraging more Hungarians to comply with the law.

Hungary already has one of the world's heaviest tax burdens. In addition, according to a report published last month

by accountants KPMG, the tax regime changes too frequently, is over-complicated and sometimes is poorly drafted, which makes control more difficult and leads to high levels of misinterpretation.

"I just can't keep up with all the changes and neither can my accountant," says an entrepreneur with a flourishing music business who admits hiring illegal immigrants and dodging taxes.

"I started this company with \$100. There's no way I would have been successful if I had done everything legally, and that goes for the thousands of other small businesses set up in the last decade. The government should remember that unemployment and the economy as a whole would be worse off without us."

Virginia Marsh

سكنا من الاعمال

Airbus set to win big China deal

By David Buchan in Paris

China is expected to place a substantial order for Airbus aircraft when its prime minister, Mr Li Peng, visits the European aircraft consortium's headquarters in Toulouse next Friday.

He will be making a visit to France that will also take him to the Elysée for a lunch meeting with President Jacques Chirac.

The Airbus concern in Toulouse would not yesterday confirm reports of an impending Chinese order for A320 aircraft. But it said an order was "plausible" given that the 150-seat A320 suited China's current needs and that Beijing was expected shortly to renew aircraft purchases.

For the past year, Beijing has stopped Chinese airlines from buying more aircraft to let the country's air transport infrastructure expand to cope with aircraft already bought.

Several Chinese airlines operate Airbus, for which some Chinese manufacturers make some parts.

But Airbus has only 7 per cent of the Chinese aircraft market, compared with its 30 per cent share of the world market.

An indication that China may switch some aircraft pur-

chases from the US to Europe came last month when Mrs Wu Yi, trade minister, postponed a trip to the US, shortly after the Clinton administration threatened action against China for infringing intellectual property rights.

Mr Li has postponed visits this month to the Netherlands and Luxembourg but is pressing on with his trip to France from April 10 to 12.

Mr Chirac has invited the Chinese prime minister for talks and lunch next Thursday, the Elysée announced yesterday.

Amnesty International, the human rights group, yesterday appealed to the 100 top French companies to take account of China's human rights abuses when doing business with the country.

Foreign companies might regard China as "an economic Eldorado", but should not remain blind to its denial of political and religious liberty, torture and arbitrary use of the death penalty, it said.

France is hoping other contracts, including ones in gas and steel, will be signed during Mr Li's visit.

Mr Chen Jinhua, head of China's state planning commission, held preparatory discussions with French ministers in Paris this week.

Devotees of a faded dynasty desert Congress

Mark Nicholson examines the election prospects for India's ruling party, no longer able to call on the Nehru family name or its traditional coalition of rich and poor supporters

Alone on the sleepy verandah of the Congress party building in Rae Bareilly, headquarters for Mrs Indira Gandhi's three sweeping election victories between 1967 and 1990, a low-caste woman lies asleep by her broom. Little sits inside the chipped ochre walls besides a calendar icon of a Hindu goddess of power, flanked by a ceiling fan in the bare office of Mr G P Shukla, Congress worker in 1967, devotee of the Nehru-Gandhi family since.

Mr Shukla, a frail, toothless 76, but still, he says, Rae Bareilly's Congress organising secretary, curls on a battered couch beside an old painting of Rae Bareilly's departed goddess of power, Indira. "Since the Nehru-Gandhi family shows no

interest here," he says, "Congress is ruined. If the family ignores this area for another five years, it will be too late."

With India's general election three weeks away, Rae Bareilly is again in the spotlight.

Rae Bareilly became the political heartland of Congress, then the dynastic property of the family of Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister and Indira's father, after Feross Gandhi, Indira's husband, won the seat in the 1950s. Mrs Gandhi, as prime minister, later dominated the seat from 1967, rewarding the town's poor voters with a lavish railway station, factories and some of the best roads in Uttar Pradesh.

Today Indira's roads are crumbling - along with the Congress hold on Rae Bareilly. The seat is now one of just five Congress holds in Uttar Pradesh, India's biggest state. UP sends 85 MPs to New Delhi. But in this state, as in other populous northern states comprising India's "Hindi belt", the party which has governed India for all but four years since independence has not survived the emerging forces of Indian politics. Its electoral hopes rest on holding seats in southern, north-eastern and perhaps western states.

In the north, the assertive Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) rose in the late 1980s to tap the religious frustrations



Prime Minister Rao garlanded at an election rally yesterday. He is expected to lose his majority

which peaked with the 1992 mass demolition of the Babri Masjid mosque at Ayodhya, 100km north of Rae Bareilly. Muslims, perhaps 14 per cent of UP's population, felt the Congress government looked on complicitously as Hindu zealots smashed the mosque, and have since abandoned the party.

Meanwhile, the rise in north India of populist caste-based parties appealing to the complex strata of low and "backward" castes which dominate agrarian north India, has fur-

ther weakened Congress.

The old Congress voting coalition of upper-caste Hindus, Muslims and Dalits - once known as untouchables - has collapsed. "Congress has deceived us," says Mr Ahmed Nehaluddin, president of the Indian Muslim Forum. "They treated us like servants and gave us no influence." In a dusty, mud-walled Dalt village 25km from Rae Bareilly, lower-caste villagers are also disillusioned. "Congress chances are slim," says Mr Ram Dayal, a village leader. "Their earlier

leaders are dead, the new leaders are all gangsters."

And in Rae Bareilly the party is demoralised. On the floor of a second Congress office, a dozen party workers sit grumbling that Mr Vikram Kaul, who is linked to the Gandhi family and is the Congress candidate for the seat, is unknown in the area and has visited it only three times in the last six months. The BJP candidate, Mr Ashok Singh, they say, is popular and well-known. "It will not be easy, we could lose," says Mr Raday Ram, one

of the workers.

Mr Kaul, meanwhile, has eschewed both Congress offices and is running his campaign from the comfort of Rae Bareilly's hotel. He returned to India only last year after more than a decade dealing in "commodities" in the Gulf and the UK. Perched on a bed in spotless white traditional *kadi* clothing and new Reeboks, he says he is not a politician, but was asked to stand for the seat out of "family duty".

But Mr Kaul's links with the Nehru-Gandhi family are attenuated. Mr Shukla fears they will not be enough. Mr P V Narasimha Rao, the Congress prime minister, opened his election campaign last month in neighbouring Amethi, seat of late Mrs Indira Gandhi, portraying himself as the inheritor of the Nehru-Gandhi tradition. He drew 15,000 people. Mr Shukla, who chuckles at mention of Mr Rao, recalls Indira drawing 150,000.

Mr Shukla's fond dream is that Mrs Sonia Gandhi, Rajiv's Italian-born widow, or perhaps one of her two children, should stand in Rae Bareilly or Amethi, to revive family and Congress fortunes. But she remains aloof. And Mr Rao, for all his campaigning invocations in Amethi, has generally done more to curb than to coax any residual Nehru-Gandhi dynastic ambitions in Indian politics.

"Mr Rao has surrendered this place," says Mr Shukla, who confesses he would today rather vote for Mr Atal Vajpayee, the more charismatic leader of the BJP standing in Lucknow, UP's state capital. Unlike Indira, the "mother of India", he says, "Mr Rao has a very negative image - like a stepfather."

Political extremes dance on dark side of the moon

Revolutionary left and right in US sometimes share anarchic hatreds

It is tempting simply to say of Ted Kaczynski - who is suspected by the FBI of being the notorious Unabomber - that one of the last of the 1960s leftwing radicals has finally been brought to ground after 18 years on the run.

But it may also be observed that on the dark side of the revolutionary moon strange forces meet, sharing little by way of comprehensible ideology but equally imbued with an anarchic hatred of authority and what they see as the dehumanising effect of modern technology.

Just 200 miles away in the same state of Montana where Mr Kaczynski was apprehended in his hand-made shack, about 20 self-styled "Freemen" are holed up in a farm - under discreet siege by law officers - determined to avoid at all costs the bloody *deus ex machina* of Waco.

But their beliefs, which may be conventionally classified on the far right of the political spectrum, do not, when stripped of their virulent anti-semitism and racism, seem so far removed from those expressed by the Unabomber in the 37,000-word manifesto published under duress by several newspapers last year.

Nor are they much different from those attributed to Timothy McVeigh, about to stand trial for last year's bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City which cost 169 lives, and of some of the rightwing militants among whom he moved; nor of the two white soldiers who shocked that modern paragon of non-discrimination, the US Army, by going on an off-duty shooting spree against blacks in Fayetteville, North Carolina, last December.

The case can be made, therefore, that domestic terrorism has merely moved from being the preserve of the old far left to the new distant right. They are linked also, if oddly, by technological competence - the Unabomber's explosive devices were perverse works of art, while the Freemen's computer-designed money orders and legal documents were good enough to fool banks and businesses to the tune of \$1m-\$2m (\$650,000-£1.3m).

The orthodox wisdom about the old radicals is that they simply "dropped out" - often to the more remote parts of the country, such as Montana, that few appears the natural habitat of the paranoid right. But this is an incomplete picture, as the subsequent history of some of the more famous names from that era shows. Tom Hayden, one of the Chicago Seven whose conviction on charges of incitement to riot at the 1968 Democratic convention in Chicago was overturned on appeal and who

later married Jane Fonda, then both actress and activist, is now a Democratic state senator in California.

Two other co-defendants, Jerry Rubin, who became a Wall Street securities analyst, and Abbie Hoffman of the Yipie Party, showed money-making talents before they died. Hoffman by his own hand. Bernadine Doherty, prominent in Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), spent 10 years on the run and now works at a university law school in Chicago and coaches children's baseball.

Mark Rudd of the Weathermen, who barely escaped with his life when a bomb factory exploded in a Greenwich Village townhouse in 1970, became a vocational school teacher in New Mexico. Sam Brown, head of the Vietnam Moratorium Committee while a divinity student at Harvard, moved swiftly into government, first as state treasurer of Colorado and then into Jimmy Carter's State Department. He now serves the administration of a more modest anti-war protester, Bill Clinton, as head of the US delegation to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in Vienna.

Angela Davis, the black radical acquitted in 1970 of murder during the invasion of a California court, is still teaching in the California University system. Bobby Seale, co-founder of the Black Panthers, has published a very non-revolutionary cookbook, *Bobby's with Bobby*. Within the last year, three other old radical fugitives wanted for serious crimes have either turned themselves in or been arrested and gone to jail. All had held jobs, raised families and otherwise merged without much difficulty into the fabric of everyday life.

That was not the choice of the man suspected of being the Unabomber. His 1960s academic pedigree - as a mathematician at Harvard, Berkeley and Michigan - surely exposed him to the radical movement which flourished at all three universities and traces of which survive in the Unabomber's manifesto.

But there is no evidence that he was ever a conspicuous part of the movement and the self-imposed solitude of the last 25 years suggests a conscious, even intellectual, disconnection from all aspects of society. If that stands at one remove from the often semi-literate and obscure rationales with which the Freemen and the militants justify their own defiance of authority, the distance, at least on the dark side of the moon, may not be that great.

Jurek Martin

Court crackdown on dubious campaign funds

By Shiraz Sidwa in New Delhi

India's Supreme Court has ruled that election spending by candidates and parties in this month's general election will be strictly scrutinised.

The ruling is a harsh indictment of Indian political parties, which since the 1970s have spent progressively larger amounts of unaccounted money on elections. A lack of transparency in election funding has strengthened the nexus

between politicians and big businesses, spawning corruption scandals, such as the "hawala" money laundering scandal which led to the resignation of several ministers from the government of prime minister P V Narasimha Rao.

The judgment is in response to a petition filed by Mr H D Shourie, a retired bureaucrat who heads Common Cause, a non-profit social interest organisation. Mr Shourie said some political parties had

not filed income tax returns in more than a decade, and were flouting the rules of parliament and the income tax laws with impunity.

In their ruling, Mr Justice Kuldip Singh and Mr Justice Faizan Uddin said: "The political parties in their quest for power, spend more than Rs10bn on the general election, yet nobody accounts for the bulk of the money so spent and there is no accountability anywhere. Nobody discloses the

source of money. There are no proper accounts and no audit."

"In a democracy where rule of law prevails, this type of naked display of black money, by violating the mandatory provisions of law, cannot be permitted," the judges said.

The court said the revenue secretary from the ministry of finance was empowered to order inquiries against defaulters and take necessary action. Parties and candidates would have to account for all money

spent on their campaigns, whether or not they had authorised the expenditure.

India's election laws permit political parties to spend up to Rs450,000 (\$13,200) per election, and individual candidates up to Rs150,000. Politicians say these figures are unrealistic.

"It is impossible for top leaders to campaign across the length and the breadth of the country, except by helicopter, but the ceiling is so ridiculously low that it allows only

for travel by bullock cart," says a senior Bharatiya Janata party MP.

But political parties which have adhered to the law have welcomed the judgment. "It will help curb lavish expenditure by some parties, and it will also help the Election Commission curb the illegal use of money during elections," said Mr Prakash Karat, a politburo member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

Mexican church leaders speak out against the 'God of profit'

By Leslie Crawford in Mexico City

Early every morning, in a shabby quarter of Mexico City, a silent queue of supplicants forms outside the offices of Caritas, the Catholic Church's charity organisation. Peasants stand in frayed trousers, clutching bundles of possessions and scraps of paper with Caritas's providential address. Women have come to beg for food. Young men, thrown out of work by the economic crisis, hope the charity will find them a job.

The queue has got longer as the recession deepens. Caritas feeds 36,000 people every week in the capital alone. The charity has rented warehouses from which it distributes donated food to orphanages, hospices and soup kitchens. It runs vocational training courses for unemployed youth, and health clinics for those too poor to afford the government's subsidised services.

Father Manuel Zubillaga, Caritas director, says the charity's resources have been overwhelmed by the destitution caused by Mexico's financial crash. Every person he turns away empty-handed increases his anger against a "morally unjust" economic system.

He quotes government statistics which estimate 40m Mexicans have been plunged into abject poverty as a result of

the worst economic slump since the 1930s, almost twice the number of poor that existed before the devaluation of the peso 16 months ago.

"The government is pursuing absurd economic policies," Fr Zubillaga says. "It ignores Mexico's social needs, it has created massive unemployment. The church does not wish to attack individuals (in government), but it is critical of the values upon which this economic model is built."

The church has added a powerful voice to those who believe Mexico's liberal economic experiment failed

Mexico's unprecedented social hardship has brought the Catholic Church into an uneasy confrontation with the government.

Over the past year, church leaders have become increasingly vocal in their criticism of President Ernesto Zedillo's orthodox economic policies. They have spoken out against tax increases and against the cutbacks in social spending needed to repay \$40bn of foreign debt last year.

At a recent, well publicised meeting of the Mexican Episco-

pal Conference, Bishop Abelardo Alvarado told assembled clergy that the Church could not accept "a system which subordinates and sacrifices fundamental human rights to economics".

Archbishop Sergio Osoro Rivera also lashed out against "profit, which has become a new, all-powerful god".

Such outspoken views are new to a Church which was officially recognised by the Mexican state only four years ago, when relations with the Vatican were restored after a 120-year break.

While nearly 90 per cent of Mexicans are Catholic, Mexico's anti-clerical 1917 constitution banned churches from owning property or running schools (a ruling tacitly ignored by the authorities), forbade priests to wear cassocks in public, and denied them the vote. Constitutional reforms in 1992 gave legal recognition to religious institutions for the first time in 70 years.

"Official recognition led to a honeymoon between the conservative Church hierarchy and the government of (then president) Carlos Salinas," says Mr Emilio Alvarez, who heads Cencos, a Catholic think-tank in Mexico City. "They were seduced by the invitations to the presidential palace, and their acceptance as members of the establishment."

By the end of Mr Salinas's

presidency in 1994, however, Mr Alvarez says the church's disillusionment with the government had set in.

Fraudulent elections, rising crime, a peasant guerrilla uprising in the southern state of Chiapas, and last year's slump propelled the church into a more militant stance, adding a powerful moral voice to those who believe that Mexico's neo-liberal economic experiment has failed.

The Mexican government is suspicious of the Catholic Church's new protagonism, and the ruling Institutional Revolutionary party (PRI) has attacked its perceived meddling in politics.

However, the government has nevertheless sought the co-operation of the church to maintain social peace.

Last November, when President Zedillo appeared to be tottering under rumours of military coups and renewed volatility in the financial markets, it was a meeting between the president and Mexican bishops, and their subsequent call for social unity, which steadied the government.

Since then, the Church hierarchy has been careful to moderate its statements, wary of fanning social unrest. Its caution has frustrated the more radical, grass-roots clergy, who believe the church is abdicating its duty to promote social change.

Toyota heads for China engine deal

By William Dawkins in Tokyo

Toyota is close to securing Chinese approval for an engine plant in Tianjin.

Japan's biggest carmaker said plans for a joint venture with state-owned Tianjin Automotive Works to make 100,000 engines a year, with an initial investment of ¥17bn (\$159m), were being considered by Beijing.

Mr Hiroshi Okuda, Toyota's president, has made no secret since taking office last August that increasing the group's Chinese and south-east Asian presence is a priority.

Volkswagen, the Chinese market leader, Peugeot, Citroen and Chrysler all have car plants in China. Japanese producers fear they are being left behind in a market where vehicle production is expected to rise from 1.3m units in 1994 to 3m by 2000.

A joint engine manufacturing project, under negotiation for the past two years, is seen by industry analysts as the first step towards a complete car plant. Tianjin makes Charade hatchbacks and HiJet vans designed by Toyota's affiliate, Daihatsu, the main Japanese producer in China.

Toyota is keen to seal the deal soon, as China plans to remove tax concessions for imported capital equipment for use by joint ventures.

Ironically, Toyota could have

established a car plant in China in the early 1980s, well before VW opened the first European plant in 1985, if it had accepted a Chinese government invitation at the time.

But the Japanese group turned down the offer on the grounds that the risks were then too great.

Beijing's memory of that snub has faded but apparently not died. "The French and Germans were prepared to take the risk and Toyota has suffered for that," said Mr Peter Boardman, car industry analysts at UBS Securities in Tokyo.

Toyota's Chinese strategy has until now been limited to gaining access through affiliates, principally 33.4 per cent owned Daihatsu and Nippondenso, its 22.9 per cent owned components manufacturer.

Tianjin produced 65,000 Charades last year, up from 38,000 in 1994 and receives technical assistance from Daihatsu. Nippondenso started a joint venture with Tianjin in February, to make starters and alternators for the Charade. The prospective engine making joint venture would supply 130,000 units for the vehicle.

Mitsubishi yesterday announced plans to produce a new multi-purpose vehicle at its Netherlands-based joint venture with Volvo, the Swedish car group, and boost capacity there by 50 per cent.

N Korea quits armistice

By John Burton in Seoul

South Korean armed forces yesterday stepped up surveillance of North Korean military movements after Pyongyang said it had renounced its obligations under the armistice agreement that ended the 1950-53 Korean war.

North Korea has been trying for two years to dismantle the armistice and replace it with a formal peace treaty with Washington.

Pyeongyang hopes this will lead to the withdrawal of 37,000 US troops from South Korea.

Officials in Seoul have warned that North Korea might try to provoke a military incident along the demilitarised zone in the belief that this

would force the US to consider such a treaty.

Analysts compared the North Korean statement with its 1993 threat to withdraw from the nuclear non-proliferation treaty as a means to gain diplomatic attention of the US.

The threat to withdraw from the international nuclear safeguards treaty led to negotiations with US and an agreement by North Korea to abandon its suspected nuclear weapons programme in return for the supply of safer nuclear reactors.

The latest North Korean action appears timed to coincide with a visit by US President Bill Clinton to South Korea on April 16 for talks on North Korea with South Korean President Kim Young-sam.

The armistice announcement may also reflect North Korean frustrations that its recent offers to hold negotiations with the US on the armistice agreement and with South Korea on emergency food aid have been ignored.

Some analysts in Seoul suggested that the South Korean decision to heighten surveillance may also reflect domestic political considerations ahead of general elections next week.

China, which has been Pyongyang's closest ally, said it opposed North Korea's attempts to nullify the armistice agreement.

The US called on North Korea to honour the truce.

PETROFINA

During its meeting of 26 March, the Board of Directors of Petrofina closed the accounts of the company for 1995. The consolidated profit amounts to 12.3 billion BEF, in which Petrofina's share amounts to 11.6 billion BEF and the minority interests' share to 0.7 billion BEF. The consolidated cash flow amounts to 39.3 billion BEF, and the sales and other operating revenues amount to 563.2 billion BEF.

The share of Petrofina in the recurrent net income reaches 13.0 billion BEF (562 BEF/share) versus 8.3 billion BEF (354 BEF/share) in 1994, an increase of close to 60%. The Board will propose to the Annual General Meeting of Shareholders on May 10, 1996 the payment of a gross dividend of 352 BEF per share or an increase of 10% on that paid in 1994 which included an anniversary dividend. This dividend will be payable to 23,252,451 shares from May 23, 1996.

Financial data for 1995 (in billion BEF)			
a. Operating profit per segment		Recurrent	
1994	1995	1994	1995
Upstream	18.6	13.2	9.9
Downstream	5.1	0.1	4.9
Chemicals	8.4	19.7	8.4
Paints	1.5	1.3	1.5
Holding	-1.4	-1.3	-1.4
Profit per segment	32.2	33.0	23.3
Inventories write-back	2.0	0.3	-
Net financial charges	-6.4	-6.2	-6.4
Taxes	-11.8	-13.0	-8.1
Net extraordinary items	5.1	-1.8	-
Consolidated net income	10.9	12.3	8.8
Group's share	10.3	11.6	8.3
Minority interests	0.6	0.7	0.5
Cash flow	39.4	39.3	33.2
c. Sales and other operating revenues	580.7	563.2	571.8
d. Financial debts	81.8	77.8	-

NEWS: UK

'There will undoubtedly be Names who remain so angry that they do not care whether Lloyd's survives'

Deal with US regulators delays pursuit of Names

By Ralph Atkins,
Insurance Correspondent

Lloyd's of London is to stop pursuing the debts of US Names for one month as part of a "ceasefire" agreement with a group of state securities regulators. Lloyd's hopes the agreement will give time to persuade regulators across the US to halt court actions, prompted by loss-making Names, which threaten to disrupt its recovery plans.

It hopes instead to persuade Names to accept the recovery plan, which includes a £2.8bn offer to loss-making and litigating Names. However, the Lloyd's agreement with the

North American Securities Administrators Association (NASAA), will not stop legal action brought by California's department of corporations, which was not part of the deal.

The California action is causing particular headaches for Lloyd's because it could lead to the freezing of Lloyd's trust funds held in the US to guarantee underwriting there. Like action by securities regulators in eight other states, it is based on allegations that investment in Lloyd's was mis-sold.

Mr Peter Lane, Lloyd's north American managing director, said Lloyd's had "a chance to educate the state securities administrators about the mar-

ket". The amount owed by US Names is likely to run into hundreds of millions of dollars.

Lloyd's hopes to reach agreements with the securities regulators modelled on proposals accepted in Louisiana. Regulators there agreed not to pursue legal action until August,

LLOYD'S

LLOYD'S OF LONDON
sue legal action until August, when Lloyd's hopes to have persuaded Names to accept its recovery plan.

Mr Philip Feigin, chairman of the NASAA co-ordinating committee, said: "We believe it will be of benefit to tone things

down for a while and give both sides a chance to talk with each other."

Lloyd's should increase its proposed £2.8bn (\$4.3bn) out-of-court offer to loss-making and litigating Names which forms part of the insurance market's recovery plan, says an independent report today. But the London law firm Slaughter and May says alternatives to the recovery plan are unlikely to leave anyone better off. It adds that a plan by Lloyd's to "re-insure" billions of claims outstanding on old insurance policies into a rescue vehicle, Equitas, this summer offers the best way of drawing a line under most Names' affairs.

Names have little prospect of escaping underwriting liabilities through legal action, the firm warns. Slaughter and May says: "All sections of the Lloyd's community are currently engaged in an elaborate game of 'chicken' as they head towards the brink. In our view, it is unlikely to be in the interests of any section of the community to take Lloyd's over the edge."

The firm adds, however: "There may well be...Names who calculate that, while they may not be better off if Lloyd's fails, they may not be worse off either. And there will undoubtedly be some Names who remain so angry that they do

not care whether Lloyd's survives or not. This is why more than £2.8bn may be required."

The report's support for the principles of the recovery plan provides an important boost to Lloyd's which welcomed its conclusions. "Strenuous efforts are being made to increase the £2.8bn, Lloyd's said.

The £2.8bn is needed to persuade Names to drop litigation and help pay for the setting up of Equitas, Slaughter and May says. It is "unable to think of a better form of 'finality' for the generality of Names, than that offered by the proposed reinsurance into Equitas".

Andersen lauds ruling in US on De Lorean

By Jim Kelly,
Accountancy Correspondent

Arthur Andersen, the UK's second biggest accountancy firm, hopes a government ban on it competing for government contracts will eventually be lifted following a US court victory in its long-running dispute with the government over the collapse of the De Lorean car company in 1982.

Andersen said a New York judge had dismissed several claims brought under federal racketeering laws - brought against the firm in its role as auditor to Mr John De Lorean's notorious car manufacturer.

It said that as a result the claims it still faced amounted to just \$30m - instead of an estimated total exposure to claims of up to \$1bn involving the award of triple damages under US racketeering laws, plus interest payments. However, the UK government is expected to pursue the remaining claims vigorously.

The action was launched in the New York courts against Andersen in the US, UK and Republic of Ireland. The suit was filed by the then UK government's Department of Economic Development. Andersen said the decision revealed the claim was an attempt to make the firm a "scapegoat for the ineptitude and mistakes of government officials".

Andersen was banned from public contract work following the collapse of De Lorean. Despite the accountancy firm's recent merger with Bland Hamlyn, which has a significant public sector business, it will hope that the judgment brings within sight a return to a potentially lucrative sector.

Potentially for Andersen in New York said: "This was an Alice in Wonderland claim from the start and it has lingered over Andersen like a

black cloud for 11 years." Zirin, Brown & Wood added that the UK government had pursued the action in the hope of hitting the "jackpot" of triple damages allowed in cases brought under racketeering laws.

The firm added that Judge M.B. Mukasey's ruling "makes clear that Andersen played no part in the UK government's decision to pour funds into an economically risky and ultimately doomed investment".

However, Andersen conceded that the judge had permitted a trial to proceed on claims under federal securities laws. In a companion case brought by De Lorean's bankruptcy trustee in the US the judge had dismissed claims based on federal statutes "leaving only what are regarded as highly speculative claims for consequential damages".

It is understood that UK government lawyers in New York are hopeful that they will still win substantial damages from the firm in the remaining actions which could come to court within a year. They believe that Andersen still has to answer serious allegations about its role as auditor of the failed company.

De Lorean Motor Cars, the manufacturing company which employed 2,500 people, collapsed in October 1982 after eight months in receivership. The government lost £77m in the collapse.

The decision to invest £53m in the project was made by the Labour government in 1978. Top-up funds continued to be provided after the Thatcher election victory of 1979, mainly because of the jobs at stake in one of the UK's most depressed regions.

Mr De Lorean, the factory's founder, now 71, was accused of stealing millions of dollars of investors' money but was never convicted.

'Mad cow disease': Farmer warns of 'catastrophe' Minister seeks to limit EU slaughter demand

By Deborah Hargreaves
and David Lascelles

The British government is likely to go along with farmers' refusal to accept the nationwide cull of cattle ordered by the European Union to stamp out BSE, or "mad cow disease".

Mr Douglas Hogg, the agriculture minister, will seek ways of limiting the cull to selected herds with a high incidence of BSE, rather than eradicating all herds in which the disease has been reported.

Mr Hogg has until the end of this month to come up with a slaughtering plan, following his failure last week to persuade EU colleagues to lift their ban on British beef.

However, the government has ruled out any special treatment for Scottish farmers who have been claiming that their herds are relatively uninfected.

Lord Lindsay, a Scottish Office minister, said yesterday that there were still incidents of BSE in Scotland and there could be no exemptions under the proposed slaughter policy.

Farmers across the UK are horrified at the prospect of any widespread slaughter policy. "My initial reaction was: 'We'll block the road and not let them in.' It will be catastrophic," said Mr Hugh Black, a dairy farmer near the England/Wales border.

The National Farmers' Union has said it will resist any government plan for a selective slaughter of cattle herds most affected by BSE. "Before even giving consideration to such a plan we would want to see hard evidence that any such action would drastically reduce the number of BSE cases in this country," Sir David Naish NFU president, told Mr John Major, the prime minister.

Sir David told Mr Major he would strongly oppose any plans to remove herds because there is no scientific justification for it. However, NFU officials realise that the government may be forced to implement such a policy if they want the worldwide ban on British beef lifted.

The NFU is therefore advising the Ministry of Agriculture on the best way to select herds for slaughter. "If it is forced on us we want it done in the most sensible way, but that doesn't mean we accept the principle of a scheme," said Mr Ian Gardiner, the NFU's policy director.

The NFU is looking at the possibility of targeting herds with more than 20 cases of BSE, which would affect 1,100 farms in the UK.

But dairy farmers who would be most affected by a selective slaughter policy have spent many years building up their herds and would find it very difficult and expensive to replace them. Heifers, either



A shopper loads purchases including beef into her car outside the Brent Cross shopping centre in north London

Shoppers flock to cut-price beef

Shoppers have regained confidence in beef, the duty manager of a big new London supermarket said yesterday, after a Marketing Correspondent writes. At the recently-opened Sainsbury's superstore at New Cross Gate, south London, Mr Phil Jeal said beef sales had been restored to normal with the help of a half-price offer last week. "Our difficulty has been in getting supplies," he added.

Mr Andy Vince, meat manager, confirmed strong sales, particularly during three days

of discounting: "Last Friday, alone, we sold what we would normally have sold in two weeks."

Some customers were taking the opportunity to stock freezers, he said. One had been seen purchasing 20 joints of beef and 20 packets of frying steak. But customers still appeared to be steering clear of beefburgers.

Mr Stuart Robinson had no misgivings about buying rump steak for his supper: "If I was going to get anything it would have been before 1988."

about to give birth or just calved, cost between £700 and £1,000 and the typical dairy herd contains 100 cows.

Mr Black reckons that a widespread slaughter policy would see the price of heifers double.

Dairy farmers like Mr Black typically breed their own replacement milking cows. He adds around 25 cows a year and culls the older cows or those that yield the least milk. The average dairy cow is slaughtered when it is 6 years old, but good milkers are often

kept in herds for much longer - Mr Black's oldest cows are 17 years old.

"A lifetime's work has gone into building up many dairy herds and in choosing the best milkers to replace older cows. Farmers would be heartbroken to see them all killed," Mr Black said.

Mr Black has had 18 outbreaks of BSE in his 130-strong herd. Most of those occurred in a group of cows born between August and September 1987 and fed on contaminated feed.

Executive alleges 'smear campaign'

By Clay Harris in London

Mr Peter Robinson last night accused Woolwich Building Society of launching an "orchestrated smear campaign" against him after forcing his resignation on as group chief executive on Tuesday.

Woolwich, meanwhile, indicated that the audit which led to his removal was prompted by a "whistleblowing" complaint by an employee who claimed internal rules had been broken. It was also investigating whether "collusion" was involved in Mr Robinson's alleged misuse of company services, including decorating and gardening work undertaken at his home.

Mr Robinson, speaking for the first time since being ousted by Britain's third largest building society, said leaks had been initiated containing "very specific" information.

Mr David Blake, head of corporate affairs, said last night: "The Woolwich has made no comment at all apart from that press release [announcing his resignation] and answering journalists' questions. We are not orchestrating anything."

Mr Robinson would not discuss the allegations against him, which he had previously denied through his lawyers. But he said Woolwich was urging employees to supply information against him, telling them: "Please come forward, your job is safe."

In his role of preparing Woolwich for a stock market flotation, circumstances had arisen in which "the fair-minded are going to have a struggle a bit". Describing his approach as "authoritative but hopefully friendly," Mr Robinson added: "We're not in a bunch of wimps, are we?"

Mr Donald Kirkham, Woolwich's acting chief executive, said earlier that employees of the society were being questioned although none had been removed or suspended. "If the allegations are proved, they will be proved on the basis there was collusion," he said. "The odd third party might be involved," Mr Kirkham added.

Although Mr Robinson became chief executive on January 1, "these allegations go back a few years," Mr Kirkham said. He added that directors learned that management had lost confidence in Mr Robinson only when it received the audit. "Until that report was on the table, the directors had no idea what the position was," Mr Kirkham said.

Mr Robinson, who had worked for Woolwich for 33 years, said: "I haven't changed in three months. I was appointed because of performance and a certain management style."

UK NEWS DIGEST

Regulator expels bond salesman

The Securities and Futures Authority has exercised its most powerful sanction against a former employee in London of CS First Boston, the investment banking arm of Credit Suisse, Switzerland. Mr David Santangelo, a CSFB bond salesman, was expelled from the securities regulator's registers. It was announced on Thursday. The regulator has, in effect, banned Mr Santangelo for life from working in the City.

The SFA fined Mr Santangelo £25,000 (\$38,000) and ordered him to pay costs of £5,000. The penalty is not as large as the £200,000 imposed on Mr Anthony O'Sullivan, former managing director of Sassoon Europe, the stockbroking firm. But expulsion is a rare punishment, imposed only 50 times since the SFA's formation in 1991. The SFA's latest action is one of the most serious against an employee of the leading investment banks.

Without SFA registration it is very difficult for anyone to obtain work in the City securities markets. No one expelled by the SFA has yet managed to make a City comeback. The SFA said Mr Santangelo had concealed a loss on a position from a client and his employer. He arranged the sale of overpriced securities to the client to disguise the loss, the SFA said.

Mr Santangelo hid the deficit, estimated at \$5m, for several months of 1994 before being discovered by his managers and dismissed from CSFB. He is understood to have left the UK for the US. The SFA is sending the board notice regarding Mr Santangelo to the US Securities and Exchange Commission. CSFB, the SFA said, has compensated the client for its considerable losses.

Nicholas Denton and George Graham

Police on IRA alert

Armed with sweeping new powers, police were on alert across the country yesterday following fears of another Irish Republican Army bombing this Easter weekend. Thousands of officers were on holiday duty, manning roadblocks and monitoring airports and public buildings following intelligence warnings of a possible bomb attack timed to mark the 80th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Uprising in Dublin.

For the first time, police had the right to stop and search pedestrians and cordon off parking areas - all powers contained in the emergency legislation rushed through parliament earlier this week. Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland secretary, yesterday condemned the IRA's continued commitment to the use of violence and said it alienated them from the public. He said it was a "very sad thing" that the IRA should choose Eastertime to reaffirm its willingness to use terrorism. "I think that shows that they are wholly out of touch with the wishes of the people of Ireland," he said.

Mark Smeaton, London

Life houses face curb

City of London regulators are preparing to crack down on life assurance companies and independent advisers which are not making enough progress with reviewing their sales of personal pensions. The Personal Investment Authority, the watchdog to protect the private investor, is planning to fire a warning shot across the bows of companies which are not getting on with the review. Their task is to identify and compensate victims of bad advice to leave or not to join an occupational pension scheme. Across the retail financial services sector, this involves opening hundreds of thousands of cases. Estimates of the total bill for compensation range up to £4bn (\$6.1bn).

The warning is likely to come as a statement after the PIA board meeting later this month. It is expected to spell out the range of penalties that the regulator can impose on those who break its rules. This includes reprimands, fines and requiring the culprit to take out press advertisements detailing the disciplinary charges against it. After it has looked at the most recent set of information reflecting progress up to the end of March, the PIA intends to inspect companies which seem not to be trying to meet the deadlines set by regulators. "The aim will be to make the punishment appropriate to the crime, but there will be an end to the 18 months in which we have been 'Mr Nice Guy'," one regulator said.

Alison Smith, Investment Correspondent

Carmaker rescued again

Reliant Motors, one of the last independent British car manufacturers, yesterday showed stronger survival instincts than many more illustrious names and emerged from insolvency for the third time. A licence to continue producing the company's glassfibre vehicles in Britain has been awarded to Mr Jonathan Heynes, who has a long background in the motor industry including 25 years with Jaguar.

Under the rescue deal Reliant's three-wheeled Robin will continue to be built. Revival of the Reliant Scimitar sports car range is possible, although Mr Heynes said that his priority would be to concentrate on strengthening the core Robin business. Mr Heynes is understood to have paid to continue producing £300,000 (\$456,000) and £500,000 for the right to continue producing Reliants in Britain. He won in competition with an alternative bid led by Mr Peter Hall, Reliant's chief executive when the company went into administration.

Alan Pike, Business Services Correspondent

LLOYDS INTERNATIONAL PORTFOLIO SICAV

J. van Schiller
L-2519 Luxembourg
R.C. Luxembourg No B 7435

Notice is hereby given to the Shareholders of an Extraordinary General Meeting of Shareholders of LLOYDS INTERNATIONAL PORTFOLIO SICAV will be held at the registered office in Luxembourg, 1 rue Schiller, on 16 April 1996 at 11.00 am in order to modify the Articles of Incorporation as stated in the following agenda:

1. Deferral of redemptions
A new paragraph is added in the Article 14, after the 4th paragraph ("Shares of the capital stock of the Company redeemed by the Company shall be cancelled") as follows:
"Without prejudice to the provisions of Articles 22, if there shall be no redemption (pursuant to requests for redemption or conversion) on any Dealing Day more than ten per cent of the Shares of the Company shall be redeemed. The Directors may declare that certain redemptions will be deferred for a period from then until a Dealing Day (being not more than seven Dealing Days thereafter) and the Company shall not be bound to redeem any Shares of the class concerned before that Dealing Day. On that Dealing Day, requests for redemption or conversion which have been deferred (and not effectively withdrawn) shall be executed with priority over later requests. If a request is deferred pursuant to this paragraph, the relevant Dealing Day shall be the day on which such request is complied with and the request shall be deemed to have been received the business day preceding the Dealing Day."
2. Change of payment value date for subscriptions and redemptions
The 2nd paragraph of the Article 21 is modified as follows:
"The redemption price shall be paid no later than three business days after the date on which the applicable net asset value was determined."
The last sentence of the Article 24 is modified as follows:
"The price so determined shall be payable not later than three business days after the date on which the application was accepted."

Resolutions on the agenda will require a quorum of one half of the outstanding shares and will be adopted if voted by a majority of two thirds of the shares present or represented.

By order of the Board of Directors

LLOYDS INTERNATIONAL PORTFOLIO SICAV

J. van Schiller
L-2519 Luxembourg
R.C. Luxembourg No B 7435

NOTICE

is hereby given to the Shareholders that the Annual General Meeting of Shareholders of LLOYDS INTERNATIONAL PORTFOLIO SICAV will be held at the registered office in Luxembourg, 1 rue Schiller, on 16 April 1996 at 11.30 am with the following agenda:

1. Submission of the reports of the Board of Directors and of the Authorized Independent Auditor;
2. Approval of the annual accounts as at 31 October 1995 and allocation of the net results;
3. Discharge to the Authorized Independent Auditor for the financial period ended 31 October 1995;
4. Election of the Authorized Independent Auditor for the new financial year;
5. Acknowledgement of the resignations of Mr R.G. Keller and Mr S. Ushiyama from the Board of Directors;
6. Election of Mr M.T. Peak as a new Director;
7. To transact such other business as may properly come before the Meeting.

Resolutions on the agenda of the Annual General Meeting will require no quorum and will be taken at the majority of the votes expressed by the Shareholders present or represented at the Meeting.

By order of the Board of Directors

By Jim Kelly,
Accountancy Correspondent

Anyone who has sat in the back of a British taxicab in the past few weeks can have no doubt that the country is about to embark on the biggest reform of the tax system since the introduction of Pay As You Earn half a century ago.

Tax drivers, along with 9m other taxpayers who file their own tax returns such as the self-employed, directors, partners and those with complicated tax affairs, are just beginning to realise what the new system means for them.

Self-assessment - or SA as it is known - begins today. In April next year the first SA tax returns will go out to taxpayers. About half will be self-employed and about half already have professional help with their tax returns.

The one thing the Inland Revenue wants to avoid is taxpayers sitting back and thinking they do not have to worry about self-assessment until the form drops through the letterbox next year. "It is

important that taxpayers realise that to fill that return in properly they have to start keeping financial records now," said the Revenue.

But employees are not the only ones who have to start getting ready for self-assessment now. "Employers should know that if they provide benefits for staff they must make sure they talk to the Revenue or their advisers to make sure that their systems will give them the right information to give to employees in 1997," the Revenue explained.

The big difference between self-assessment and the old system, and the shift from prior to current year assessment which goes with it, is that taxpayers will now provide the figures on which their tax bills are based. Their tax form will be processed and checked later.

If taxpayers want to they can even work out for themselves what their tax bill will be and go straight ahead and pay it. The Revenue will look at the forms later - and may launch inquiries in some cases. A new system of penalties will give the new

tax regime teeth. This system is clearer and initially much more rigid than the present system which involves what the government calls the "annual palaver" of negotiations between taxpayer and taxman.

The problem with the new system is that it places much of the administrative burden on taxpayers to collect the right information and fill in the forms - and on employers to provide precise information such as the cash equivalents of benefits-in-kind such as a company car.

The Inland Revenue has always insisted that the new system should not force any taxpayer who does not need advice under the old system to seek it under SA. This claim is widely doubted by professionals - who are eager to win new clients when the new tax forms arrive next year.

Taxpayers will have a range of paid advice to choose from. Barclays Bank is offering three services, of varying complexity, linked to SA. H&R Block, the big US tax filing specialists, is looking at the market.

Prices for electricity delivered to the consumer by the electricity supply companies in the United Kingdom			
Period	Unit	Price	Price
1st half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
2nd half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
3rd half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
4th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
5th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
6th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
7th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
8th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
9th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
10th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
11th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
12th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
13th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
14th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
15th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
16th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
17th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
18th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
19th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
20th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
21st half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
22nd half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
23rd half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
24th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
25th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
26th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
27th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
28th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
29th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
30th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
31st half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
32nd half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
33rd half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
34th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
35th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
36th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
37th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
38th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
39th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
40th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
41st half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
42nd half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
43rd half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
44th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
45th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
46th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
47th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
48th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
49th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
50th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
51st half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
52nd half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
53rd half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
54th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
55th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
56th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
57th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
58th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
59th half	per kWh	10.50	10.50
60th half	per kWh	10.50	10.

Sumitomo takes Y11.6bn loss on UK property arm

Tel 01624 624957 Fax 01624 628703

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COMPANIES AND FINANCE: UK

BET claims 'dirty tactics' by Rentokil

By Tim Burt

BET, the business services group fighting a £1.9bn takeover bid by Rentokil, has complained to the Takeover Panel over what it claims are dirty tactics by its rival.

The company told the panel that it suspected Rentokil or its advisers of being the source of market rumours suggesting it was coming under pressure from institutional investors to

agree a recommended offer.

Last week, both Legal & General and M&G Investment Management were said to have urged BET to consider an agreed takeover.

L&G denied it had discussed such a possibility. M&G declined to comment, although privately officials said it had not yet spoken to BET.

The panel, which has already intervened twice during the bid to remind Rentokil and its

advisers of their obligations under the takeover code, was said to be studying BET's claims and to have raised them with Rentokil.

Meanwhile, Sir Christopher Harding, chairman of BET, accused Rentokil of hiding behind "cheap soundbites" by criticising its defence. Rentokil last week queried BET's cash management and said it was heavily indebted.

Sir Christopher, however,

said: "Those absurd comments only serve to emphasise Rentokil's fundamental lack of understanding of BET's strength and value."

Rejecting suggestions that its net debt exceeded £100m, Sir Christopher said borrowings had fallen from £114m at midday to £80m on March 31. Mr Clive Thompson, Rentokil's chief executive, hit back by saying: "Despite BET's claims to be cash generative, it

is not. It cannot even finance the existing dividend of £38m without recourse to borrowings, let alone further investment and acquisitions."

On Thursday, shares in BET rose 1 1/4p to 207p - a high for the year - while Rentokil gained 8 1/4p to 388p. At that level, its offer of nine new shares and 800p cash for every 20 BET shares values its target at 204 1/4p a share. There is a cash alternative of 179 1/4p.

Rentokil has until next Friday to increase its offer, declare the existing bid final or allow it to lapse. In its annual report, published yesterday, the company said it would appoint two new non-executive directors if it completed the acquisition.

The report also showed that Mr Thompson's salary and benefits rose from £742,000 to £857,000, including a £30,000 performance-related bonus.

BT awaits Chinese reaction on C&W

By Alan Cane in London and John Hidding in Hong Kong

China's view of the proposed merger of British Telecommunications and Cable & Wireless, the two largest UK telecoms groups, could become clear following a meeting in Beijing next week of top BT officials with the Chinese Ministry of Post and Telecommunications.

China's interest in the merger, which would create one of the world's largest telecoms groups with a market capitalisation of £33bn, arises from Cable & Wireless's majority ownership of Hongkong Telecom, one of the most strategically important operators in Asia.

"Given Hong Kong's return to Chinese sovereignty next year and Hongkong Telecom's business interests on the mainland, BT will be anxious to get Beijing's blessing", said one Hong Kong telecoms analyst.

There are no restrictions on foreign ownership of telecoms companies in Hong Kong and there are no provisions for China's approval of ownership changes or licence awards in the treaties governing Hong Kong's handover to China next year.

Beijing, however, has sought to assert its influence in large contracts and franchises in Hong Kong which span the handover. China delayed approval for a new container terminal in the territory and continues to block the award of mobile telecoms licences by the Hong Kong government, citing disagreements over the development of the market.

It is thought that the BT executive travelling to China may be Mr Alfred Mockett, managing director of international operations.

It seems certain that the Chinese authorities will want to quiz the BT delegation on the progress of the negotiations.

Hongkong Telecom's strategy in China also underlines the importance of Beijing's backing. The group and its parent company have agreed significant investments in China, including a 1994 agreement to spend \$300m (£197m) on building networks.

They have also developed close business ties. Dr Brian Smith, C&W chairman, visited China two months ago in the company of Mr Rod Olsen, acting chief executive, and Mr Jonathan Solomon, executive director of strategy.

Industry observers in Hong Kong said that in the case of a merger with C&W, BT would seek to reassure Beijing concerning Hongkong Telecom's ongoing investments.

The two companies' financial advisers, N.M. Rothschild for BT and Goldman Sachs for C&W, were this week continuing with attempts to resolve the regulatory, business and political barriers which stand in the way of the merger.

See Lex

McAlpine falls £23.5m into red

By Motoko Rich

Losses on the closure of its general building division and other businesses forced McAlpine, the construction group, into the red last year.

Pre-tax losses of £23.5m compared with £10.7m profits in the 14 months to December 31 1995. The group changed its year-end from October to December at the end of 1994, making direct comparisons difficult.

Mr Oliver Whitehead, chief executive, said the bulk of the £24.7m exceptional charges were associated with the closure of the general building business, which made losses of £6.8m (£7.7m).

He said quitting that business, which built private sector offices, shops, factories and warehouses, would allow the group to focus on special projects in sports and under the private finance initiative.

The group has already secured a contract to build a football stadium in Blackpool and is the preferred bidder to build a hospital in Hereford.

"While our general building business had been generating sales up to £250m, it was making no money," said Mr Whitehead. "I am anticipating that the special projects business will fluctuate between £50m and £100m in sales but with

more reliable profitability." Civil engineering profits fell to £200,000 (£1.7m) and the group took an exceptional charge of £1.2m. Profits in housebuilding fell to £11.5m (£17.9m).

In the US division, operating profits of £3.4m compared with £1.7m in the 14 month period.

Losses per share were 37.2p (earnings of 10.2p). The final dividend is held at 4p, making a total of 7p, the same as for the previous 14 months.

The shares rose 4p to 178p on Thursday.

COMMENT

The rise in McAlpine's shares suggests the City believes the group has made a brave move in closing businesses. By taking the big hit now and cutting costs in its profitable civil engineering division, the group has put itself in a position to move forward unhindered by the general building albatross. However, recovery in the housing sector is likely to be slow and in its new special projects business, it will be competing with larger construction companies on the private finance initiative. On pre-tax profit forecasts of £12.8m for 1996, the shares are trading on a p/e of 13.4, a discount to the market. Although bid rumours could add some shine to the share price, on its own, that seems fair value.



Oliver Whitehead (left) and Gavin Morris, finance director

Harland and Wolff reduces losses

By John Murray Brown in Dublin

Harland and Wolff, the Belfast shipyard, reported a reduction in pre-tax losses from £16.9m to £6.8m for 1995, helped by a drop in the provision made for future orders.

The Northern Ireland shipbuilder, which this week secured a contract worth an estimated £100m to build a floating production vessel for British Petroleum, incurred an operating loss on continuing operations of £9.9m (£21.9m).

The company, which was privatised in 1989, saw turnover

down 8 per cent from £28m to £26m. However, cost of sales were cut by almost £30m to £26.2m, helped by an £8m decrease in the provision for estimated future losses on contracts.

Mr Per Nielsen, chief executive, said the results were adversely affected by increased losses in the ship repair division, cost increases in two tanker contracts, and problems in the yard's paint division.

He said the market for conventional tankers was "at unrealistically low levels" as a result of "overcapacity and the continued use of direct and

indirect subsidies by some countries."

Mr Fred Olsen, chairman, said 1995 had been a "year of transition" but expressed confidence the company had repositioned itself to take advantage of increased demand for floating platforms, estimated at between 30 and 40 over the next five years.

Harland and Wolff is in a consortium with BP, Brown & Root UK, Single Buoy Moorings of Monaco and Collexip Stena Offshore to design and build a surface production facility for the deep-water field of Schiehallion, 135 miles west

of Shetland. The deal is worth £400m.

Mr Nielsen, said the company was not concentrating exclusively on new construction, but would also consider conversions of existing tankers to floating rigs. "We are cautiously optimistic that we will be successful in securing at least one major conversion project during 1996."

The results include increased bank borrowings through a £25.4m 8-year loan at 7.5 per cent to finance a capesize bulk carrier, which is chartered by Trasys Shipping, its shipping subsidiary.

Elys hits back at Panther bid

The directors of Elys (Wimbledon), the department store, yesterday told shareholders they unanimously believed the offer from Panther Securities failed to reflect the value of the company.

Elys said 44 per cent of the Panther offer was represented by Elys' own cash balances, while the bid valued Elys' remaining assets "at a mere 52p in the £1".

Trustees representing 39.17 per cent of the shares had informed the board it was not their intention to accept the present offer. Panther has made a two-tier offer for the 70.04 per cent of Elys shares it does not already own.

New valuations hit Bilton

By Simon London, Property Correspondent

Falling industrial property values were behind a 3.4 per cent dip to 315p in net assets per share over 1995 at Bilton, the property company which specialises in the industrial sector.

The year-end property valuation, carried out by directors rather than external valuers, resulted in a 4 per cent decline to £306m in the value of the investment portfolio.

The company, in which the founding Bilton family controls a 29 per cent stake, led 350,000 sq ft of space. Less than 8 per cent of the portfolio is now

vacant. Bilton's biggest development project is at South Ruislip, west London, where it has a £2,000 sq ft distribution depot and plans to build a retail warehouse park.

Pre-tax profits declined to £18.2m, against £18.6m, which included a £800,000 contribution from sales of investment property. Gross rental income was unchanged at £25.2m.

The decline in property values led to an increase in gearing from 10.6 per cent to 12.2 per cent.

Earnings per share declined to 14.31p (14.75p). The proposed final dividend is 7.44p, making a total of 10.33p, an increase of 4 per cent.

Mr Thomas believes the Rock has "a fighting chance" of floating on its own. Its strategy, however, carries more risk than that of B&W. "Bristol & West's management appear to have recognised that they are not large enough or strong enough to float," he said.

B&W's denial last week that it was about to be bought by National Australia Group, which already owns some retail banks in the UK, has not ended the expectation that it will be picked up by another organisation.

Its branch network is concentrated in south-west England, and might well be more valuable to an organisation

such as a large insurance group, which needs a high street presence, than to a retail bank with good distribution.

The society has had a difficult time. Under Mr Tony Fitzsimons, its former chief executive who left abruptly in September 1993, it went in for over-expansionist lending, and spent significant amounts on acquisitions and technology. B&W has only just sold the last remnants of Hampsons, the estate agency it bought during Mr Fitzsimons' tenure.

Over the past few years, however, its performance has generally been improving. It is undertaking the range of activities it undertakes with the aim of becoming specialised in providing mortgages, savings and investments.

It is not there yet but the strategy of streamlining could serve it well, even if only to increase its value, rather than enabling it to remain independent and mutual.

Five Pearson directors in £1.7m share-out

Five directors of Pearson shared a £1.69m share bonus in 1995, according to the media group's report and accounts published on Thursday. The payments were triggered by the performance of the Pearson share price in the previous three years.

As a result, the total salary and bonus package paid to Lord Blakenham, the chairman, rose 65 per cent to £750,000, including a £413,000 share payment from the three-year incentive plan.

Mr Frank Barlow, managing director, saw his total remuneration increase 59 per cent to £783,000, also including a £413,000 share bonus.

The bonuses also contributed to a 56 per cent rise for Mr Mark Burrell, development director, who received £239,000, former finance director Mr James Joll's 53 per cent rise to £254,000 and deputy managing director Mr David Velt's 22 per cent increase to £261,000.

Pearson, which owns the Financial Times, said the group's shareholder return had outperformed the average of FT-500 companies by 83 per cent in the three years to the end of 1995, which had triggered the maximum award of shares under the incentive share plan.

On Thursday, Pearson's share price rose 20p to 731p, close to an all-time high. The shares have been buoyed by bid speculation, a recent feature of the media sector.

Last month, Pearson reported a 23 per cent rise in 1995 pre-tax profits to £365m. The result was boosted by capital gains of £133m from the sale of a holding in BSkyB.

Operating profits fell by 5 per cent to £260m, including a near-£15m contribution from acquisitions. Sales increased 18 per cent to £1.83bn.

Schroders chief gets total £2.2m

By Nicholas Denton

Schroders, having last month initiated an efficiency review in an effort to control costs, disclosed figures showing that its chairman was the most highly rewarded head of any UK investment bank last year.

Mr Win Bischoff, appointed chairman last year after 11 years as chief executive, received a package worth £2.2m in 1995. The eight executive directors received £2.9m between them.

Although Mr Bischoff's basic salary was a relatively modest £175,000, it was boosted by a complicated array of bonuses. Mr Bischoff received an annual bonus of £455,000, a cash payment under the "long-term incentive" scheme of £231,000, and a £300,000 contribution to his pension "in lieu of bonus".

These items were broadly unchanged, in line with the static profits which Schroders reported last month. But Mr Bischoff also made a £1m profit on the exercise of 120,000 executive share options accumulated in previous years.

He crystallised his options close to the peak in Schroders' share price last year, when the bank was subject to heavy takeover speculation. Mr Bischoff has consistently maintained Schroders' continued commitment to independence.

Mr Bischoff's remuneration is unexceptional by the standards of US investment banks such as Morgan Stanley, which paid its chairman \$6.7m (£4.4m) last year. And shareholders are also beneficiaries of a share price which has tripled since the start of 1993.

Increased pay for executive directors contributed to a rise last year of the cost-income ratio from 68 per cent to 76 per cent, which Schroders said it wanted to reverse.

NEWS DIGEST

Reckitt makes \$123m disposal

Reckitt & Colman has sold for \$123m (\$80.9m) its US personal products division, as part of its refocusing on household cleaners and related products following its £1bn purchase last year of L&F from Eastman Kodak.

The buyer is JW Childs Associates, a Massachusetts investment management concern which is paying \$108m in cash and the balance in a seven-and-a-half year subordinated note. Brands sold include Wet Ones moist towelettes, Chubs thick baby wipes, Sinaca breath freshener, and Ogilvie home permanent hair care products. The division generated operating profits of about \$10m on \$110m turnover last year. Its net tangible assets at year end were \$30m.

The sale brings to about \$370m the money Reckitt has raised from disposals since the L&F purchase. Its goal is for total proceeds of \$400m, but it declined to say what else was on the block. It has used the money to pay down net debt which stood at \$258m at the end of 1995. *Roderick Orum*

Ennemix complains to Panel

Ennemix, the aggregates company, has complained to the Takeover Panel about statements in a document issued by its predator, Redland, the building materials group.

The document questioned Ennemix's claim that its net asset value was 50p. Redland cited a valuation carried out by Grimley, the chartered surveyor, which said that 41p of the value was attributable to "minerals and landfill void reserves for which no planning consents exist".

Ennemix said Grimley had not made a "Red Book" valuation - the Red Book is the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors Appraisal and Valuation Manual. Redland admitted this, saying Grimley had had to make "various assumptions". Redland has bid 32p a share for Ennemix, valuing the company at £5.8m. Redland has so far acquired 29.9 per cent of the shares, and holds convertible preference shares that would raise the total to 33.1 per cent. *Simon Cooper*

Ex-Arjo man's 11% pay rise

Mr Alain Soulas, the ousted chief executive of Arjo Wiggins Appleton, received an 11 per cent pay increase last year, in which the Anglo-French paper group saw a sharp fall in profits.

The annual report showed Mr Soulas received a £817,000 (£565,000) pay and benefits package, including an increased pension contribution of £138,000 (£128,000). He is also expected to receive a severance package worth almost £1.2m following his abrupt departure last month.

Arjo said it had also paid £366,796 to Giovanni Agnelli, the Italian holding company with an indirect holding in the group. Agnelli succeeded Mr Galateri di Genola, one of its executives, as an adviser on Arjo's £56m acquisition last year of Sottocri Distribuzione, the Italian paper merchant.

● Laird Group, which this week announced a 38 per cent increase in full-year profits, paid Mr Ian Arnott, chief executive, £312,000 (£271,000) in 1995. *Tim Burt*

Write-offs take toll on Hornby

Write-offs totalling £4.73m left Hornby Group, the maker of toy and model products, with a pre-tax deficit of £4.3m for 1995, against a £511,000 profit previously.

Turnover for the 12 months - the company has changed its year end to March 31 - rose 7 per cent to £33.6m following a 16 per cent like-for-like increase in sales of core products. Mr Peter Newey, chairman, said current sales were meeting expectations.

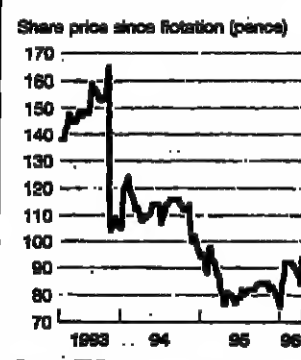
Operating profits before exceptional items climbed 52 per cent to £1.61m in 1995, reflecting increased sales and higher margins. Last month's sale of Norman Fletcher resulted in a £4.08m write-off, while the write-off of the investment in San Francisco Toymakers led to a charge of £894,000. In addition, reorganisation within Hornby Hobbies produced redundancy costs of £280,000.

Referring to the departure of director Mr Keith Ness in October, Mr Newey said that although a theoretical compensation payment could be "substantial", the board had concluded, after taking advice, that Mr Ness was "unlikely to recover the full amount of his claim", which Hornby is contesting.

Hornby expected to agree a settlement at a lower figure, but as the amount was uncertain, no provision had been made in the results. *Gary Evans*

Loss adjusting lift for Hambro

Hambro Insurance Services



Shares in Hambro Insurance Services rose 10p to 94p on Thursday after the group announced that profits for the year to March 31 would be "materially higher" than the 58m-59m which analysts had been forecasting.

Mr Tony Kay of Panmure Gordon, the house broker, said the revised forecast was now for £11m pre-tax with forecast earnings per share up from 8.3p to 10.3p. The loss adjusting side had received an "exceptional number of claims", with work for non-life companies after the winter freeze being particularly strong. In the previous year profits fell to £8.03m following a poor performance from the loss adjusting side. The company then said it would restructure that business.

Bertie Bassett bags popcorn

Trebor Bassett, the sugar confectionery subsidiary of Cadbury Schweppes, is entering the £33m UK popcorn market via the purchase of Portfolio Foods, which makes the Butterkist brand.

Portfolio, which trades as Craven Kellier, makes confectionery and popcorn, and employs 700 people. Sales in 1994-95 were £42m. Assets at the end of March 1995 were £12m. Cadbury has not disclosed the purchase price, but it is being funded through debt facilities. The deal is subject to regulatory approval.

BWI advances to £3.4m

BWI, the packaging and process machinery maker, increased interim pre-tax profits by 14 per cent to £3.4m, on the back of significant growth in the vision division. Turnover for the six months to January 31 was £44.6m (£42m).

Profit figures given in Thursday's Financial Times were incorrect.

MONTHLY AVERAGES OF STOCK INDICES

	March	February	January	December
FT-SE Actuaries Indices				
100 Index	3702.3	3738.1	3715.8	3650.0
Mid 250	4278.7	4173.8	4084.1	3964.0
350 Share	1874.0	1864.2	1845.1	1820.7
Non-Financial	1953.49	1941.86	1919.92	1879.54
Financial Group	2837.38	2942.72	2915.37	2879.82
All-Share	1836.04	1839.78	1819.13	1783.30
Eurotrack 100	1587.90	1549.02	1529.63	1488.18
Eurotrack 200	1869.24	1853.97	1827.18	1767.37
FT/SE-A World Index	207.28	208.26	202.41	200.42
FT Indices				
Government Securities	92.61	94.00	95.88	95.39
Fixed Interest	111.22	112.72	114.47	114.59
Ordinary	2760.9	2748.0	2749.6	2647.4
Gold Mines	2282.54	2380.24	2166.50	1832.85
SEAG Bargains (5.00pm)	38.69	32.96	33.73	25.414
Highest close March				
FT-SE 100	3777.1 5m			3639.5 12m
FT-SE Mid 250	4326.7 20m			4212.0 11m
FT-SE 350	1899.0 5m			1830.3 12m
FT-A All-Share	1864.59 5m			1810.03 12m
Ordinary	2807.9 5m			2729.3 12m

سكرا من الاعمال

COMMODITIES AND AGRICULTURE

WEEK IN THE MARKETS

Squeeze lifts sugar futures

Nearby positions on the London Commodity Exchange while sugar market set for life-of-contract highs on Thursday as a relentless technical squeeze sent prices still higher. August, the second month, was \$390 a tonne in late trading, up \$5.10 on the day and \$20.90 on the week.

"At the moment it looks like people who are trying to physically cover sugar can't do it and are having to pay up," a trader told the Reuters news agency. "You're basically seeing people who are having to get out of positions or people who are long of the market who are just taking it up."

It was suggested that the current firmness of the London market could be attributed to undeliverable white sugar hedged against May contract and the expected tightness of quality whites into the summer months.

"Nobody can sell any physical sugar, it's priced too high and none of the trade houses can create any physical off-take," said a trader.

In its latest Sugar Situation report, London-based trade house E.D. F. Man said support for nearby delivery sugar prices had for some time been attributed to the absence of physical supplies. "But now that the physical raw sugar exports are more readily available and greater supplies from southern hemisphere origins are expected to get under way in late May early June, this support is attributed more to the technical issue of the segregation of the terminal (futures) and the physical markets and logistical difficulties slowing the pace of available raw sugar supplies to the market."

Man said 1996 still appeared to be "a year of two halves", with increased raw sugar supplies in the second half expected to put prices under pressure. "The whites market, however, appears to have been stripped into many sections with tightness of European Union quality sugar likely to persist throughout the year in contrast to the overall availability of the poorer quality whites elsewhere. It concluded that, because of logistical difficulties, "a dearth of tenderable origins and the tightness in physical European white sugar supplies are limiting the prospect of falling sugar prices."

Other LCE contracts had been trending lower during the week, notably the coffee market, in which nearby positions were more than \$100 a tonne down at one point. But short-covering and book-squaring ahead of the long weekend reduced losses on Thursday.

Cocoa's fall had been much more modest and the reappearing of US investment fund buying on Wednesday night was enough to send nearby futures values to fresh four-month highs on Thursday. The July position reached \$1,098 a tonne before retreating to \$1,004, up \$5 on the day and \$1 on the week.

The London cocoa market was "trading on the back of fear," one trader told Reuters. "It's fear and technicals pushing it."

At the London Metal Exchange most base metals contracts on Thursday repeated at least some of the damage done earlier in the week as copper led a general retreat.

The three months delivery copper price ended at \$2,479.75 a tonne, up \$5.25 on the day but still \$59 down on the week. Traders attributed the rally to short-covering and book-squaring and viewed the action as a correction within a longer-term downward trend. "Everyone got themselves a little short in most of these markets and wants to cover," said one.

The strongest LME market on balance was lead. Continuing concern about nearby supply tightness restricted its early decline and encouraged the subsequent recovery. By Thursday's close the three months delivery price was at \$900.50 a tonne, up \$16 on the day and \$11 on the week.

Richard Mooney

WEEKLY PRICE CHANGES

job creations in February to 624,000, from 705,000 initially announced, was deemed insufficient by market participants. Furthermore, the US Labor Department announced 140,000				
BENCHMARK GOVERNMENT				
	Coupon		Real Date	
Australia	10,000	02/06	06	
Austria	6,125	02/06	06	
Belgium	7,000	05/06	06	
Canada	12,000	02/06	06	
Denmark	8,000	03/06	06	
France	5,750	05/01	06	
Germany	5,000	02/06	06	
Italy	8,000	05/06	06	
Japan	No 129	03/06	06	
Netherlands	No 182	03/06	06	
Sweden	10,150	01/06	06	
Switzerland	6,000	02/05	06	
United Kingdom	10,000	12/00	06	

FINANCIAL TIMES

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Saturday April 6 1996

Alliances in Ireland

Eighty years after Patrick Pearse and his comrades seized the Dublin General Post Office, on Easter Sunday 1916, Britain still faces the threat of violence from Irish republicans who believe the revolution started that day remains incomplete. The IRA, in its 1996 Easter message, explicitly reaffirms its refusal to lay down its weapons. The memory of the Docklands bomb on February 9 is still fresh, and there is an all too familiar sense of tension in Britain this weekend. The IRA's threats are anything but idle.

This is all the more discouraging in that the British and Irish governments have now met the demand by Sinn Féin, the IRA's political wing, for a firm date on which all-party talks will start. The demand for prior "decommissioning" of some or all the IRA's weapons, which had been the main stumbling block, has been dropped. The only condition for Sinn Féin's participation is now "the unequivocal restoration of the ceasefire of August 1994". But that is precisely what the IRA is refusing to give.

The enormous disappointment of February 9 has prompted many questions. Some focus on the circumstances in which the "peace process" broke down; in particular, on the extent to which the British government was to blame. Was it wise to dig in for so long on an issue it eventually had to concede? Having decided finally to give way, by accepting the Mitchell report, was it wise to obscure this fact by appearing to erect a new precondition in the shape of elections to an Ulster assembly?

But those are not the only, and perhaps not the most important, questions. If the process was so fragile, was it not perhaps flawed from the outset? If the IRA was ready to resume violence on so flimsy a pretext, what was the value of Sinn Féin's commitment to pursue a settlement through "exclusively peaceful methods"?

Disappointed expectation

Unlike the Irish government and the other nationalist parties in Ireland (including the Social Democratic and Labour party in the north), Sinn Féin has still not accepted that Northern Ireland will remain part of the UK as long as the majority of its inhabitants so wish. If the IRA was persuaded to halt the violence in 1994 by leaders who argued that non-violent politics would now bring rapid progress towards a united Ireland, that expectation was bound to be disappointed and violence was bound to be resumed, sooner or later.

Many people feel the peace pro-

cess has concentrated too much on bringing in the extremists on both sides and too little on building trust between the mainstream parties representing the two communities. Comparison is often made with South Africa, where Mr F W de Klerk and Mr Nelson Mandela formed an alliance across the racial divide in order to steer their country away from violence. No such alliance has been formed between Mr John Hume, the SDLP leader, and Mr David Trimble of the Ulster Unionists.

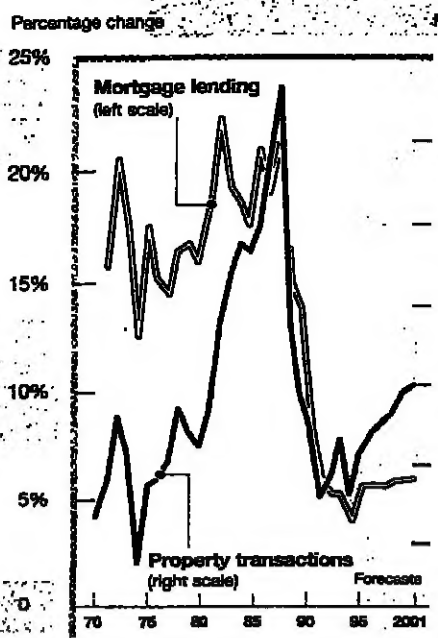
Sisyphian task

Instead it is left to the two governments to discover common ground and then coax their respective protégés towards it. But this has proved a Sisyphian task, because the protégés are forever looking over their shoulders, fearing competition from more intransigent forces within their own communities. Mr Hume has devoted all his energies to bringing Sinn Féin into the process. Mr Trimble has to compete with the Rev Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist party - and does so by insulting the most sympathetic Irish government unionists have ever had to deal with. Neither man seems willing to give priority to good working relationships with the other.

Another question that has been asked is whether both governments have concentrated too much on negotiating with political parties which, however sincerely committed to non-violence, derive their raison d'être from the existence of separate communities with conflicting aspirations. Could more have been done to foster those many elements in Northern Irish civil society, starting with the business community, which operate across confessional boundaries and are anxious to free the province from its sectarian heritage? Might the peace process have fared better if more had been done to make members of the minority in Northern Ireland feel they were truly equal citizens, by tackling the "four ps": police, prisoners, poverty and parity of esteem?

Perhaps. But it would be naive to imagine there is a quick fix to be found in any of these areas. The more the British government appears to lean towards the minority, the more suspicious and defensive the majority will become. In the end, it is the unionists who have to be persuaded that the Irish identity of their Catholic fellow citizens does not threaten them. And it is the IRA which, by continuing to threaten them with actual violence, makes the task of persuasion so appallingly difficult.

UK property: off the floor

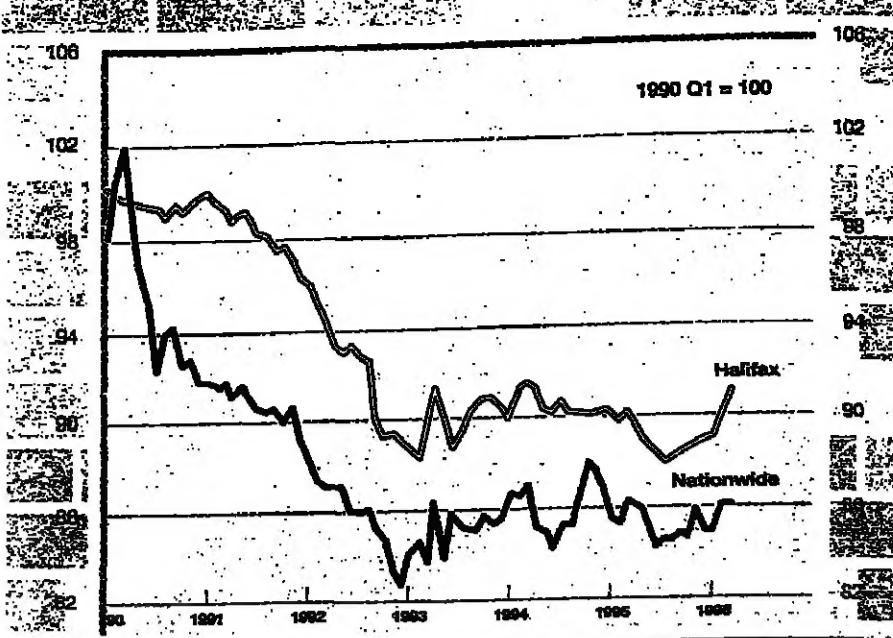


Annual average % change

	1995	1996	1997
North	-3.8	1.8	3.4
York & Humber	-3.1	1.3	3.2
East Midlands	-2.5	2.2	3.7
East Anglia	-1.2	1.5	3.4
SE (Excl London)	0.3	1.8	3.7
Greater London	-0.4	1.1	3.1
South West	-1.3	2.9	4.0
West Midlands	-1.2	2.0	4.0
North West	-3.7	0.1	3.1
Wales	-0.8	0.7	3.1
Scotland	n/a	2.7	4.0
Northern Ireland	8.8	8.8	8.8
UK	-1.7	2.0	3.5

Source: Halifax (figures actual)

Source: Halifax (figures actual)



Reasons to be wary

Robert Chote on the latest recovery in the UK housing market

Like the Grand National and the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race, sightings of "recovery" in the housing market have become a traditional ritual of the British spring. As the clocks go forward, so the nation's estate agents shake off their winter gloom and proclaim that this time - maybe - the upturn is going to last.

The evidence of recovery is clear to see. House prices are rising at their fastest rate for six years, mortgage lending is accelerating and more people are tramping around suburban show homes, mentally visualising new curtains and carpet. But we have seen it all before. In three of the past four years, the housing market has surged in the early months of the year only to fall flat after Easter. This time the omens are promising, but there are still reasons to be wary of a setback.

For the moment, though, the news is good. Halifax Building Society reported this week that its national index of house prices had risen for the eighth successive month in March and by the largest amount in two years. Over the past three months, house prices have risen at a rate equivalent to nearly 10 per cent a year, taking the average to 283.210. But this has in effect only reversed the decline seen early last year.

Demand for home loans has meanwhile been increasing. Net mortgage lending by the UK's big banks increased to a seasonally adjusted £631m in February, from £578m in the previous month. Lending by building societies fell a little between the same two months - in part reflecting a loss of market share to the banks - but lending remained more than 10 per cent up

on the same month a year ago. Mr Joe Dwyer, chief executive of Wimpey, the UK's largest housebuilder, says the number of visitors to - and sales of - new homes so far this year has been much the same as in the equivalent period of last year, but with builders operating from fewer sites this represented an underlying improvement. The House Builders' Federation also recently reported a rise in the volume of people visiting sites and reserving properties, while the number of completed transactions has also picked up.

But will this recovery endure, where others have fizzled out? The present momentum bodes well, analysts believe. "With mortgage rates having fallen to their lowest level for 30 years, this is likely to be maintained", argues Mr David Walton, economist at Goldman Sachs, the

investment bank. As a proportion of income, mortgage payments are now at their lowest level since the late 1970s. Interest rates may start rising again at some stage in the next few months, but competition among lenders is expected to help keep mortgage rates relatively low.

"Affordability, having improved sharply since end-1990, will deteriorate somewhat in 1997 as the base rate rises", says Mr David Kern of NatWest Group. "However, with the base rate forecast to average 6.5 per cent over the next five years, housing will remain by historical standards very affordable between now and 2001."

The housing market should also be buoyed by rising incomes. In 1995 average earnings did not increase quickly enough to keep pace with price rises and tax increases, leaving many people in

work worse off. But real disposable income is now increasing again and is expected to accelerate as the proceeds of tax cuts feed into people's pockets. A number of these came into effect yesterday, including a 1p cut in the basic rate of income tax.

But this may not be enough to keep the recovery going in the short term. Mr Ian Shepherdson, at HSBC Markets, argues that the rate at which house prices have increased in the past few months will prove impossible to sustain, in part because fixed-rate mortgage offers are disappearing or getting more expensive.

"Unless mortgage approvals pick up sharply, then prices will not be growing as quickly as they have in recent months," Mr Shepherdson says. But he adds that house prices will still and the year 5 per cent higher than they started it.

The outlook for the new housing market will meanwhile be clouded by the overhang of unsold properties with which builders were left at the beginning of the year.

The burden of mortgage and consumer debt is expected to continue acting as a brake on the housing market. Between 1980 and 1990 the value of outstanding mortgage debt more than doubled relative to personal disposable incomes. Since then it has stabilised and Mr Kern expects only a very gradual decline over the remainder of the decade. Almost 2m people remain trapped in "negative equity", where the value of their house is insufficient to pay off their mortgage.

But most analysts expect the debt burden to restrain the recovery, rather than extinguish it. Mr Kern expects house price increases to average 2 per cent across the UK this year. For the rest of the decade Mr Kern predicts price increases averaging 3.5 per cent a year.

Is anything likely to throw these predictions into doubt? Two obvious possibilities suggest themselves. One is the danger that February's unexpected rise in unemployment might be repeated. "People already say that job insecurity is the biggest deterrent to buying a house and that affordability is not a problem", Mr Dwyer says.

The other potentially disruptive factor could be the approach of a general election.

Mr Dwyer argues that people might buy early to beat a Labour government, but some economists fear the uncertainty generated by a looming election could stall the housing market for several months. For a Conservative party relying on rising house prices to help them to victory that must be a worrying prospect.

The persistent Easter myth

Hope springs eternal in estate agents' hearts, but in the Midlands there are signs this year that the optimism might at last be justified.

Across the 27 branches of Shipways estate agents in the region, 1996 has seen a flurry of activity by buyers and sellers after several years of stagnation and decline. Sales rose 16 per cent to 900 homes in the first quarter of the year over the same period in 1995.

But the market still has a mountain of misery to climb. Many homeowners have yet to come to terms with substantial losses. And prices show few signs of improvement.

"I think it is definitely premature to suggest that prices are moving up," says Mr Peter Veitch of Hadleigh chartered surveyors and estate agents in Birmingham. "There is a colossal backlog of unsold properties, which have been for sale for four years or even more."

Good news on mortgage rates and taxes has been balanced by job cuts in both manufacturing and services in the Midlands.

Mr Bob Scarff, managing director of Dixons, a Birmingham estate agency, says: "It's not the feel-good factor, but the feel-not-so-good factor. The biggest thing that has held people back is the thought that prices could go down further. If

they were thinking of buying a big house at £200,000, they were worried about it going down to £200,000 in 12 months. Now people feel that won't happen." In such a conservative market, it is not surprising that smaller, cheaper homes have fared better.

Few expect wonders from what used to be the traditional Easter rush to buy homes. "Still the Easter myth persists," says Mr Veitch, "with all the clients thinking this is the best time to advertise. Then everyone moans they had no response. I'm afraid it will be the same story next year too."

Richard Wolffe

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Number One Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HL

We are keen to encourage letters from readers around the world. Letters may be faxed to +44 171-873 5938 (please set fax to "fimo"), e-mail: letters.editor@ft.com. Translation may be available for letters written in the main international languages.

Wrong view of electorate

From Mr Richard Britton.

Sir, Philip Stephens demonstrates a worrying lack of contact with the electorate about which he makes such confident assertions ("invitation to honesty in the halfway house", April 2). While accepting that the electorate "dislikes the idea of being pushed around by foreigners" he contradicts himself by saying voters regard sovereignty as a "political abstraction".

What is sovereignty if not a desire for the country in which one lives to make decisions without being "pushed around by foreigners"?

He has it quite the wrong way round to claim that voters do not understand this issue while, according to him, readily understanding "the link between Europe and prosperity". It is that which remains a "political abstraction" to the great mass of the British public.

Richard Britton,
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Silver St,
Aldersbury,
Salisbury,
Wiltshire, SP5 3AN, UK

CORRECTION

Mr Latham-Koenig

A line was missing in Mr A. Latham-Koenig's letter of April 2 on turning points in Soviet history. It should have read: "...and, especially, the ending of the party's monopoly of political power by a vote of the central committee in February 1990 - which was the real and conclusive turning point".

Cause for concern over single currency

From Mr Selwyn Hodson-Pressinger.

Sir, Many who worked in Europe in recent years, like me, appreciated the merits of a common currency. It was something the D-Mark was already fast resembling, being Europe's common currency by reference. For this reason many of us were initially enthusiastic about a single currency, which seemed a logical progression from the common currency.

However, the full implications of EMU and the difficulties arising from Maastricht's timetable for the imposition of a single currency give genuine cause for concern. To maintain the present momentum

for currency union looks increasingly impracticable in view of prevailing economic conditions. This is surely not the manner in which to defend the Franco-German axis and the cause of European integration. Sadly, EMU is not on the agenda of the intergovernmental conference which has just begun, but events may well ensure it receives the serious attention it deserves.

As for issues set out in the UK government's recent white paper on Europe, they are clearly too important to be traded off lightly during these IGC negotiations. The UK must ensure its prime objective

is generally understood: to remain a European partner, but only on terms that are acceptable.

Britain's IGC negotiations would clearly benefit from the threat of a British plebiscite on the country's continued full membership of the EU, not just on the single currency issue (as discussed in your article "Referendum for a rainy day", April 3). Such a sword of Damocles hanging over the IGC proceedings should ensure UK interests were properly protected.

Selwyn Hodson-Pressinger,
17 Place des Relais,
95800 Lille, France

Minimum wage and unemployment link tenuous

From Dr Stephen Bazem and Prof Mark P. Taylor.

Sir, Michael Prowse ("Jobless by decree", April 1) is dismissive of serious research on the effects of minimum wage legislation but is confident enough to conclude that such legislation is "foolish" on the basis of his own back-of-the-envelope calculations and his unsubstantiated claim that minimum wage laws have "substantially increased unemployment" in Europe. On the last point, the experience of France is worth examining since the relatively high French unemployment rate is a stock piece of evidence in these arguments.

French competitiveness has improved substantially relative to the UK over the past 10 years - relative unit labour costs have fallen 8 per cent compared with a 3 per cent fall for the UK, even taking into account the devaluation of sterling. Moreover, the value of the

French minimum wage relative to average earnings has fallen over the same period and fewer people actually earn the minimum (8 per cent in 1993 compared with 12 per cent in 1989). Hence, it is difficult to see how the minimum wage - or stronger social protection laws more generally - have made France less competitive and undermined profitability.

The causes of French unemployment are more complex. The strong franc policy has had the desired effects of moderating both inflation and pay awards but it has had a deflationary impact on consumer and capital expenditure. The effects of this are exacerbated as the government has decided to cut the budget deficit in order to meet the Maastricht criteria for European monetary union. In addition, several important sectors of the French economy - notably agriculture, finance and the civil service - are at present undergoing

a period of restructuring which generally involves downsizing.

But clearly France's relatively high unemployment is not caused by the minimum wage or by higher levels of social protection than are enjoyed in the UK. The link between the minimum wage and unemployment is similarly tenuous in other European countries.

Mr Prowse's article is an interesting exercise in drawing a crooked line between an unwarranted assumption and a foregone conclusion but it should not be taken seriously.

Stephen Bazem,
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Bordeaux University,
Mark P. Taylor,
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Liverpool University,
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33604 Pessac Cedex,
France

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صلى الله عليه وسلم

Man in the News • Shimon Peres

Unpaid dreamer wakes up

Israel's prime minister is remoulding himself for the election, says Julian Ozanne

Only two years ago Shimon Peres, Israel's prime minister, borrowed words from Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the novelist, and described himself as an "unpaid dreamer".

It seemed fitting for a man who appeared destined to sit out his career as number two to Yitzhak Rabin, then the prime minister. Mr Peres forged bold, and sometimes fanciful, ideas about a new Middle East while Rabin worried about the domestic constituency.

The Rabin-Peres double act, which had dominated Labour party politics since the early 1970s, seemed a winning combination in a revolutionary era of making peace with Arab foes. As Rabin, a former army chief, talked and acted tough with the Palestinians, playing to the deep-rooted fears of Israelis about their personal security, Mr Peres pressed the peace agenda on a reluctant Rabin and an unsure nation.

But the assassination of Rabin last November and the assumption of the premiership by Mr Peres deprived the double act of its bad cop and has left Mr Peres scrambling to remould his image.

As he prepares for the May 29 general election, Mr Peres's dreaming days seem an electoral liability. He is burying his visionary ideas and dusting down his hardline rhetoric.

This week he dropped a political bombshell by saying he would seek a referendum among Israelis - a risky proposition with an uncertain outcome - on a final peace agreement with Palestinians, embracing the future status of Jerusalem, of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, and of Palestinian statehood.

Much is at stake. A Peres victory should guarantee the completion of the five-year peace process begun with the Palestinians in 1993. And it may result in a comprehensive Middle East peace agreement embracing Syria and Lebanon and leading to a normalisation of relations with the rest of the Arab world. Such an agreement would underpin Israel's phenomenal economic growth of recent years, driven by the opening of new markets and the access to international capital that peace has delivered.

A victory by the opposition rightwing bloc led by Mr Benjamin Netanyahu, the Likud leader, would throw the peace process into crisis. Mr Netanyahu, who has said he would

not negotiate directly with Mr Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian president, opposes territorial concessions on the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. Senior Palestinian officials say such policies would cause their immediate withdrawal from the peace talks.

Mr Peres, born in White Russia in 1923, is already guaranteed a place in history. He has held almost every ministerial post and played a role in most of Israel's crises since its birth in 1948. But an election victory would establish him as the pre-eminent Israeli peace-maker and would allow him to complete his vision of restructuring the Middle East.

Mr Peres faces a formidable challenge, however. A spate of suicide bombings by Palestinian extremists opposed to peace hit at his Achilles heel: his perceived inability to keep Israelis safe. The attacks also destroyed the substantial lead he had in opinion polls over Mr Netanyahu.

The Palestinian attacks, combined with an increased number of attacks by Hizbollah guerrillas in southern Leb-

anon, have forced Mr Peres to talk and act tough. He has sealed Israel's borders with the Palestinians and ordered demolitions of Palestinian homes. He has declared war on the Hamas Islamic movement, pushing Mr Arafat to crack down on it, and reinforced security measures.

In the wake of the suicide bombings he persuaded world leaders to come to an anti-terrorism summit in Egypt, to express their support for Israel. He also convinced US President Bill Clinton to come to Israel for the third time in his administration.

Mr Peres has also dropped his visionary speeches of a new Middle East. He used to say it would be a region dominated by "banks not tanks, ballots not bullets where the only generals will be General Motors and General Electric".

Instead he is banging the war drums. He now talks about a physical separation between Arab and Jew rather than integration and cooperation.

shame my complete commitment to national security," he said this week. It is unclear how much of a genuine conversion Mr Peres has undergone. But it is obvious that he desperately needs to combat the negative image he has of being incapable of safeguarding security.

This public view of Mr Peres is deeply ingrained. In the four elections he has fought as leader of the Labour party he has failed to win a single outright victory. In the macho world of Israeli politics, up to now dominated by generals and those who fought for the creation of the Jewish state, Mr Peres's long history of working inside Labour and government bureaucracy has been a liability.

"He is often seen as the consummate politician, the inveterate insider and a schemer," says Mr Danny Ben-Simon of the leftwing Davar Rishon newspaper. "It's not a fair image because he has done as much as anyone to build up Israel's security and defence forces. But it remains the single biggest obstacle

to his chances of victory." Since the sharp fall in his popularity following the suicide attacks Mr Peres has clawed back a narrow lead. The latest opinion poll gave Mr Peres 51 per cent of the vote to 45 per cent for Mr Netanyahu. But he knows that, with seven weeks to go, such a lead is too close for comfort.

Next week, after Passover, Israel will get full-blown election fever and Mr Peres will have to brace himself for a hard-fought and probably vicious campaign.

Recent polls have proved there are many floating voters who will decide the outcome of the election. If the security situation remains quiet - and Mr Arafat delivers on his promise to amend the Palestinian covenant calling for the destruction of the Jewish state - Mr Peres is in with a fighting chance. But another round of Islamist attacks would destroy his campaign.

Such a development could lose Israel its opportunity to solve the Middle East conflict once and for all. At least for the four-year term of a rightwing government, the hopes of Middle East peace would be on hold. For Mr Peres, defeat would mean a departure from active politics. That would force him, perhaps for the first time in his life, actually to become the "unpaid dreamer" he once believed himself to be.



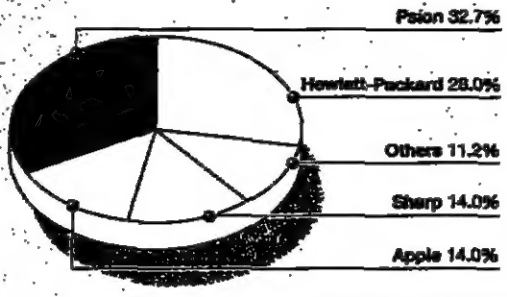
NOISE POSITION

Paion: David among the Goliaths

	1994	1995	% change
Revenue (£m)	22.53	37.36	+66%
Gross profit (£m)	2.53	11.65	+359%
Profit before tax (£m)	4.22	7.45	+77%
Profit after tax (£m)	2.40	3.50	+46%
Final dividend	2.40p	3.50p	+46%
Total dividends for the year	3.50p	5.00p	+43%

Source: Paion

Worldwide hand-held computer market share 1995



Source: Forrester Research

The appliance of science

Paul Taylor on the maker of a gadget that today's executives cannot bear to be without

Move over Filofax, here comes Paion. If the leather-bound personal organiser was the yuppie symbol of the high-spending 1980s, the discreet pocket-sized Paion 3a hand-held computer is the gadget every executive must have today.

Paion, a 16-year-old British company, has taken some clever electronic engineering and turned it into the closest thing to a technological fashion accessory.

For many Paion owners, life without their sleek battleship-grey electronic companion - complete with miniature keyboard - is unthinkable. Some executives even have two, in case they lose one.

These machines - which fit in the palm of a hand - are the powerful successors to the early electronic organisers which incorporated four basic functions: diary, address book, calculator and clock.

Today's Paion has as much computing power as many desktop machines and a range of software to match. In addition to the built-in software, which includes a word processor package and a spreadsheet, dozens of supplementary programs are available, ranging from electronic maps to wine guides.

The brand loyalty that the London-based company has built up has helped it successfully take on the giants of the worldwide computer and consumer electronics industry and secure leadership of the £200m world hand-held computer market. It now manufactures more than 100,000 hand-held computers sold worldwide. Last year it posted a 78 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £11.7m.

Paion is now valued on the stock market at £235m, up from just £3m at the time of its 1988 market debut, with the

stake held by Mr David Potter, chairman and chief executive, valued at £88m. Last year alone, the workforce at its manufacturing sites in Greenford, west London, and Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire expanded by 50 per cent to 900. But the picture has not always been so rosy. In the early 1990s the recession and the high cost of new product development plunged the company £2m into the red and sent the share price tumbling.

Many in the City were ready to write off Paion as another British high-tech blunder which - like Sinclair Electronics with its 280 computers and Acorn Computer - made popular products but lacked the business skills needed for long-term commercial success.

However, Paion - which once made mainly hand-held industrial machines for stock-taking and meter-reading - has confounded the pessimists by exploiting a niche in the market for comparatively low-priced and easy-to-use hand-held personal computers.

Last year the company sold 350,000 of its innovative Series 3 machines at prices ranging from £250 to £400. Hand-held computers account for just under a third of Paion's £90.6m of sales, with other products including software and modern communications devices.

Mr Potter, an energetic 52-year-old who began his career as a mathematician and physicist but dislikes being referred to as a "boffin", raised the seed capital for Paion by speculating on shares in a divestment fund. When he founded the group,

with his wife as the other main shareholder, he wanted to call it simply "Pa", after the Greek letter. But he discovered a US company with the same initials, so he added the letters "ion" to make it sound grander - like Exxon.

While maintaining close links with academia, he is critical of the UK academic system which he believes fails to provide scientists and engineers with enough basic business training. The result, he argues, is that while UK companies are renowned for technical innovation, few have translated this into commercial success.

In the past he has also been critical of the City arguing that it has failed to back and support British technological innovation. Nevertheless he believes that, with the right encouragement, companies such as his own can compete effectively with their rivals in North America and Japan.

At present he believes the biggest challenge facing Paion is "the speed at which the market is growing". This means the company has to keep expanding production just to maintain its market share. But he claims the group's technology is at least 18 months ahead of its rivals in terms of functionality and ease of use.

Last year about 10m hand-held machines were sold around the world, a figure which analysts expect to grow to 20m by 2000 and to 30m by 2005. "By the end of the decade, the hand-held computer will be a standard tool for every executive and professional", Mr Potter says.

With an eye to the future, the company has been building increased communications capacity into its machines. It recently launched a software programme allowing users to send and receive corporate e-mail.

It is soon expected to launch a machine with built-in GSM (Global System for Mobiles) technology, enabling it to be used for wireless data exchange without a separate telephone handset. "Portable computing and communications are like apple pie and cream: they go together", Mr Potter says.

But he knows that if Paion is to stay ahead in its race against deep-pocketed rivals such as Hewlett-Packard, Sharp and Sony, it must continue to invest heavily in research while expanding its customer base. Last year the company spent a relatively high 6.2 per cent of revenues on research and development.

In an attempt to address this problem it intends soon to licence its operating system, the basic software which controls its products. It hopes that by doing this it can generate additional revenues and persuade licencees to bear a share of future research and development costs.

Mr Potter, an enthusiastic supporter of UK technology and manufacturing, explains the failure of many other UK high-tech companies to emulate Paion's success by arguing that innovation alone is not enough.

He believes that what has set Paion apart is a combination of its technological edge and the careful execution of an effective business strategy. "Having a good idea is just a small part of business success," he says, "the rest involves factors like manufacturing, distribution and marketing".

Alice Rawsthorn on a turning point for the cinema industry

Flight to a new dimension

The league table of the week's highest grossing films in North America in Variety, Hollywood's parish magazine, changes as rapidly as the pop charts, but one film has been there every week for two years - *Wings of Courage*.

Wings of Courage is an adventure film made by the Sony movie studio and starring Val Kilmer, best known as the caped crusader in *Batman Forever*, and its longevity is all the more impressive as it is only on show at eight cinemas in the US and Canada.

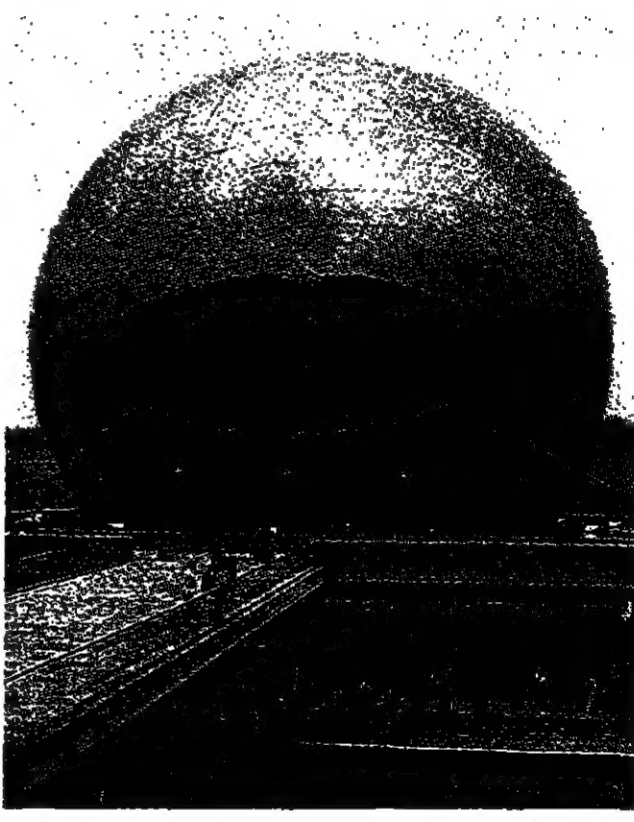
It was made with Imax 3D technology, which creates such realistic three-dimensional images that the viewers, who watch it through special headsets, feel as though they are at the centre of the action. After years of being relegated to museums and theme parks, scores of cinemas using Imax and other futuristic film technologies will open this year showing Hollywood-style movies like *Wings of Courage*.

One of the ironies of the film industry is that, although the studios spend millions of dollars on state-of-the-art special effects, most movies have been shot and shown in the same way since the invention of the talkies in the 1920s.

Hollywood had a flurry of innovation in the 1950s to try to fend off competition from television. A few innovations survived, notably stereo sound. Others were quickly scrapped, including the ill-fated Cinescope and the elongated CinemaScope screens that the movie mogul, Sam Goldwyn, described as making "a bad film look twice as bad".

In the late 1960s, three Canadian film-makers developed hyper-realistic images on to giant screens using 70mm film, rather than standard 35mm. The Toronto-based Imax company has since adapted that system to relay three-dimensional images.

Imax and its US rivals Showscan and Iwerks, have also developed formats to accommodate "motion simulation" technology, in which the cinema seats move to match movements in the film, such as car chases. This technology was devised for theme parks in the 1980s by George Lucas, director of *Star Wars*, and Doug Trumbull, a special effects expert on *2001: A Space Odyssey*.



Room with a view: the La Gécide cinema at a Paris science park

Until recently, the commercial development of these new technologies was inhibited by the dearth of compatible films. It is impossible to adapt a 35mm film to be shown on Imax or Showscan, so the films must be shot with special equipment, which is complex and costly.

So far, the new technologies have been used largely in theme parks, including George Lucas's *Star Tours* ride for Disneyland, and for short educational films shown in museums or science parks, such as the Showscan installation at the Tokyo Science Museum and the Imax cinema at La Gécide science park in Paris.

Hollywood studios have not considered it financially viable to make Showscan, Imax or Iwerks films, as they can be shown in so few cinemas. Similarly, cinema operators have been loath to invest in Imax theatres (which cost from £3m) because of the shortage of films.

The turning point came two years ago when Sony launched *Wings of Courage*, the first Imax film featuring a Hollywood star, director and studio. One of the main motivations for Sony, the Japanese elec-

tronics group, when it acquired the Columbia-TriStar studios in 1989 was to apply its technological expertise to the film-making process. Sony converted its cinemas at Lincoln Square in New York into a state-of-the-art complex of conventional theatres and an Imax 3D unit with a 90-by-100-ft screen. It commissioned *Wings of Courage* so it would have a Hollywood feature film to show there.

The Imax theatre opened in October 1994 and has since been sold out for most performances. Ms Barris Lookes, who co-chairs Sony Theatres, said the company was "very, very pleased" with its progress. Sony has already premiered another Imax film, *Across the Sea of Time*, and plans to produce up to three a year. It will open an Imax theatre in Tokyo this autumn and a third in San Francisco late next year.

Another will be included in the flagship Sony Centre at Potsdam Square in Berlin.

Other companies are following Sony's lead. 20th Century Fox, the Hollywood studio owned by Mr Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, has negotiated a production joint

venture with Imax, as has Capital Cities/ABC, part of Walt Disney. Mr Rich Gelfond, vice-chairman of Imax, says it is discussing production deals with three other studios.

The prospect of more films has encouraged mainstream cinema operators to invest in Imax. At present, there is only one Imax theatre in the UK, at the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford, but a second is due to open in 1996 at the Trocadero Centre on London's Piccadilly Circus. At least another four are planned, including one by the British Film Institute at Waterloo.

At present, there are 128 Imax installations worldwide, and the company is working on orders for 44 more. Similarly, Showscan has 31 orders in addition to its 61 installations, most of which are in theme parks and leisure centres, including one at the Trocadero. Showscan recently introduced Showmax, a cinema-style format, to compete against Imax in that market, but the latter company is suing for breach of copyright.

The Hollywood studios are also liaising with technology experts on other futuristic forms of cinema such as interactive films, where the audience determines the plot. The results of this research will be used in conventional cinemas and in the theme parks run by the studios' parent companies.

"The commercial prospects of Imax and other new formats will be determined by the quality of the films. It's critical," says Mr Ben Freedman, director of Robins Cinemas which operates the Showscan installation at the Trocadero. "People will come once for the technological experience, but they will only come back if there's something new to see."

At present, the Imax and Showscan production process is so cumbersome that it would be impossible to shoot a high-speed action film such as *Die Hard* or *Heat*. Imax is now investing in research to try to resolve that problem.

"We're still a long way off seeing a *Die Hard* on Imax," says Sony's Ms Lookes. "And we're not going to see Imax or anything else take over from conventional theatres in the foreseeable future. But there's clearly demand for them as an alternative - and they're fun!"

Membership of Manila's leading golf clubs has become an important element in setting up deals in the Philippines, says Edward Luce

The above-par place for business

Manila's golfers think they have found a way of predicting trends in the Philippine capital's excitable property market. The method is simple: track the price of Manila Golf and Country Club membership shares and the broader property market will follow.

A glance at the recent movement of the exclusive club's proprietary shares - one of which must be purchased before a membership application is submitted - backs up this thesis.

Since 1993, the price of these shares has quadrupled to about 24m pesos (£600,000), overtaking rates at Tokyo's most expensive courses. In the same period, real estate prices in Makati, Manila's business district, have similarly rocketed by about four times, to \$10,000 per square metre. The story is identical in Manila's

second business district of Ortigas - home to the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club and headquarters of the Asian Development Bank - where the two indicators have also quadrupled over the same period. Wack Wack's shares are trading at about 10m pesos.

Mr José Crespo, general manager of the Manila Golf and Country Club, says the parallel holds good as far back as the 1950s. "When I joined in 1959, membership dues were around 9,000 pesos," he says. "Now it is up at 24m. This tells the story of what has happened to Manila property prices since then."

According to Mr Crespo, the soaring rates of golf club membership reflects the rising popularity of the sport. Once considered a game for bored expatriates, golf has become an obsession for the Philippines

business community. With the zeal of converts, the country's businessmen - and more recently, businesswomen - have invested huge sums in the hope of finding themselves next to the governor of the central bank or the chairman of San Miguel brewery on the ninth hole.

A quick scan of the list of the Makati club's 537 members is the equivalent of flicking through a condensed version of *Who's Who* in the UK. And, as in some of Britain's more exclusive establishments, members can anonymously blackmail hopeful applicants.

First on the Makati club's list is President Fidel Ramos, who has frequently denied accusations that he is planning to change the country's constitution so that he can run a second term for the presidency in 1998. His favourite retort,

when challenged about it, is that he intends to spend the rest of his life on the golf course. This has done little to reassure his critics, who point to the number of meetings that he holds on the fairway.

Underneath the president is a roll-call of the country's top executives and their foreign counterparts. The membership of the late Ferdinand Marcos is now in the hands of the former dictator's estate.

Manila's other clubs and courses reflect a similar pattern. At Ayala Alabang, for example, a prosperous southern suburb, the golf and country club's membership list is an index of that district's business luminaries. Its proprietary shares are trading at about 3.8m pesos.

Bank in the Philippines, says that the bank's Manila Golf membership card is an indispensable ticket for business networking.

"One should not exaggerate the number of business deals actually clinched on the golf course," says Mr Fredrick. "But there is no doubt about the fact that it is a very important part of the process."

Trading in the country's golf and sports club shares is more informal than in cities such as Tokyo, where the Nikkei index of golf club shares can be called up on screen. Manila's golf club brokers reckon that it will be a few years before membership prices go electronic.

"At the moment, we only have three brokers officially trading club shares," says Cherry Manzano, an executive at MetroLand, a property and stockbroking firm. "There

are plenty of others doing it on a freelance basis, though." She says that trading in golf shares is becoming more sophisticated every month, with members leasing out their playing rights for up to 600,000 pesos a year.

Chibs, meanwhile, are forging reciprocal playing deals with overseas counterparts. Members of the Manila Club, for example, can play at the Royal Bangkok Golf Club in Thailand, while Wack Wack's golfers can tee off at Tokyo's Club 300 when on business in Japan.

"I am one of the few people who find the game deadly boring because it is so slow," admits Ms Manzano. "However, if I set up my own company there wouldn't be much choice. This is the way business is done in the Philippines. I'd have to force myself to like golf."

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CURRENCIES AND MONEY

MARKETS REPORT

Dollar dawdles

By Philip Gawth

A stronger than expected March payrolls report in the US yesterday failed to provide fresh direction to the dollar which remained confined to the fairly narrow ranges which have characterised trading recently.

Although bond prices fell quite sharply as traders concluded that the report made any early cut in US interest rates less likely, the dollar did not follow suit. Initially it rallied around half a penny to DM1.4850, but then slipped back to close in London at DM1.4825. Against the yen it finished at ¥107.46.

Trade was very thin on account of the London market being closed for Easter, and US markets only staying open until lunchtime.

The payrolls report had been keenly anticipated following the frantically strong February report, which spooked the US

bond market, without having much impact on the dollar. When markets re-open in earnest next week, the strength of the US economy may have an impact on the dollar, but there was little evidence of this yesterday.

Mr Klaus Said, head of foreign exchange at JP Morgan in New York, said the dollar was "stuck" with illiquid trading conditions probably being the

main factor capable of generating a decent move. "I favour the upside, but I don't have a position to support it."

He said he was more confident of the dollar rallying against the yen than against the D-Mark. Earlier in the week the dollar reached a 28

Dollar

DM per \$

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Weekend FT



The miracle on breakfast radio

Philip Crowe beams up the evangelists for a talk show grilling on how they edited the good news

Presenter: Good morning. With me this morning are four men. They are all authors, responsible for some of the best-known writing in all literature. Their work has been translated into virtually every language. And all four were involved to guard the beds of Victorian children. They are Mark, Matthew, Luke and John.

John: May I come to you first and start straight in with the most controversial aspect of your work? To put it starkly, you stand accused of fermenting anti-Semitism. You seem never to pass up an opportunity to run down the Jews or to blame them for the death of Jesus Christ. People have suggested seriously that the roots of the Holocaust stretch back into the Gospel which you wrote.

John: Very disturbing charges they are. But let me

put them in the context of when I was writing. I wrote my account a little later than the other three, when we'd had time to absorb the cataclysmic events in Jerusalem. The destruction of the City, and of the Temple, was shattering. The Jews, more than the Romans, were held responsible for the death of Jesus and Christians had a rough time from some of the Jews.

We thought that the destruction of the Temple might be a judgment of God.

Presenter: But a Jewish historian has estimated that the Romans killed or captured more than 1m Jews at that time. If that's God's judgment, then it's horrendous, a dreadful revenge for the death of one man or for causing trouble to his followers. It's out of all proportion. What kind of God would do that?

John: I didn't ever make any explicit connection between

the death of Jesus and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

Presenter: Maybe not, but it's implied. And Matthew, you make the connection explicit in some of the parables you record. What about the story of the marriage feast, where you tell us that the King was so angry with those who wouldn't come that he sent his soldiers and destroyed them and burnt their city? Or the response which you tell us the Jews all made when Pilate washed his hands - they all replied, his blood be on us and on our children. You seem to be blaming a whole race for the wrong done by a few.

Matthew: Yes, it's usually John who gets the blame for this, but the interpretation some of us put on the stories Jesus told was added in the light of what had happened to Jerusalem. At the time, it was a widespread understanding,

and it was held by some Jews as well as by most Christians. But I make no excuses for it. We were wrong. And if we'd known the use people would make of it, I'm sure we would have written differently.

John: Besides, we offered no encouragement to people, and particularly not to Christians, to persecute or to kill anyone.

Presenter: But some of the sayings of Jesus are very severe, condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees as hypocrites, and particularly all that talk about the fires of hell and eternal punishment.

Luke: Jesus was at his most severe when he met up with self-righteousness or hypocrisy. He'd probably have had something to say about the hypocrisy of today's tabloids.

Presenter: And The Daily Telegraph.

Mark: I recorded those sayings about hell in my account, but people then knew what

Jesus was talking about. There were no civic amenity sites. People took their rubbish and threw it over the city walls into the fires in the Valley of Gehenna. They were always smouldering, never went out. It was a way of saying that some people are good for nothing. But Jesus said nothing about everlasting punishment. To use your own words, "What kind of God would do that?"

John: And don't forget those remarkable accounts of forgiveness.

Presenter: Well, one of the most remarkable is in your Gospel, but only in the margin or added at the end like an appendix. Why is that? Didn't you write it?

John: You mean the story of the woman who was to be stoned for adultery. No, it didn't come from me.

Luke: I wrote it. I had it almost straight from one of the people who were there, that's

where all the detail comes from. But some prudish monk left it out when he was copying my manuscript.

The bit about her being caught in adultery, in the very act, probably fired his imagination. The early church was no different from today.

It made more of sexual wrongs than political sins, and this story was too lenient for them. When they did eventually put it back into the gospels, after about 800 years, they added it to John's account instead of mine.

Presenter: You tell us that Jesus wrote something in the dust with his finger, but you don't tell us what.

Luke: He didn't write anything. They'd used sticks to drive the woman towards him. She was considered unclean. That's why she was to be put to death by stoning, so that no one would have to touch her. Jesus was so angry he just bent down and ran his finger through the dust.

When he could bring himself to speak, he said, very quietly, "Let the one who is without sin throw the first stone". And when they'd all taken themselves off - not surprisingly, it was the eldest who left first - he told the woman not to sin again.

But he didn't condemn her.

Presenter: And what would have happened to the man? If she was caught in the act...

Luke: Nothing. That's what was so unjust about it. Men could play the field, but if the woman got caught she was put to death. Jesus loved women, he respected them, and he took terrible risks to improve their position in society. The idea that he was not the marrying

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Continued on Page II
Philip Crowe is a former principal and tutor of Sarum and Wells Theological College.

You have heard, have you not, of Nongqause, the celebrated seer of the Xhosa tribe? The lady, whose name is spelled as I have it, figures prominently in South African history. More than that, the true story of her fatal prophecy may stir our brainboxes this Easter Saturday morning.

Nongqause started foreseeing in 1865, when she was a young girl. If you want to picture her at it, you must imagine the click-sound, represented by the qa in her name. Strike the tongue against the mid-roof of the mouth, as you would to imitate a horse's clop-clop. You can either say qa, or you cannot. Do not try too hard.

Ms Click went around telling everyone that on February 18 1867 the whites would be driven into the sea by a great wind. Other miracles would occur. Fields would spring up, ready to harvest. Illness and old age would disappear. In short, the world would start anew, to the great advantage of the Xhosas.

Just one little matter had to be cleared away. It was neces-



Joe Rogaly

We can profit from a prophet

Thoughts in memory of Nongqause, seer of the Xhosa tribe

sary for her people to kill all the livestock they possessed. They should also destroy their grain and other fruits of the earth. She was believed. More than 200,000 head of cattle were slaughtered. The fields were razed. The Xhosas waited confidently for the payoff.

As you will know, or may have guessed, Nongqause was wrong. The replacement stock she had said would trot in from the ocean shore did not appear. The sun did not rise blood-red. Dead chiefs did not walk again. It was a catastrophe. In the first half of 1867 some 70,000 of her-tribespeople are thought to have perished of starvation, although some may have fled to where they could beg for food. The rest of her life was a sad anti-climax.

Our prophethood spent time on Robben Island and, in some danger if she appeared in public after her return, adopted the name of Victoria Regina. It was fitting. We were taught at school that the military power of the Xhosas, which rivalled that of the Zulus, was broken. Nothing beats the power of mass delusion. Nowadays it is magnified by the media.

You will have spotted the connection between my potted history and the British government's present embarrassment over how many million cows to slaughter if confidence in beef is to be restored. I do not, however, intend to dwell on this. My thoughts lie in another database, directly connected with the account rehearsed above.

Today we delude ourselves about everything, because we know so little. We have less faith than Nongqause had in her vision, and only a little more understanding of how the world works.

A year or so ago we were told that history had come to a full stop and for a fleeting second some of us accepted that absurd proposition. The accomplices and successors of such sound-bite notions fly past in ever-increasing swarms, driving us dizzy with confusion.

No wonder some of us blather on about a sense of anxiety in the developed world. As to the cause of all the angst - you name it, some successor to Nongqause has proposed it. The devaluation of

religious belief. The entry of women into the labour force. The birth control pill. The end of the traditional family. The loneliness of the solitary city-dweller. Multiculturalism, or its opposite, ethnic division. The erosion of trust. Technology. Science. The collapse of communism. The weakening of traditional values. The high cost of social security. Population growth. Humanity's steady, relentless, destruction of the planet.

In my trade I naturally receive missives on these and similar subjects every other day. A week or so ago I was at a conference organised by the Institute for Public Policy Research on the "risk society". Anthony Giddens said that in times past people worried

about what nature might do to them. Today we are concerned about what we might do to nature. Risks manufactured by new technology were experienced in most domains of human life. Science created uncertainty. The professor was brilliant.

This week I received a new book *The Politics of the Real World*. It postulates, not for the first time, that there is a connection between global environmental degradation, the declining quality of life in Britain and increasing international insecurity. The connection is the assumption that economic growth, providing higher incomes, is the principal measure of progress and the main goal of political endeavour. Market forces pro-

vide the motive power.

The publishers launched the volume concurrently with the establishment of "Real World", described as a new movement for change. It is backed by 33 charities and pressure groups, including respectable names like the Save the Children Fund, Oxfam and Friends of the Earth. Most of the book's chapters contain something to chew on.

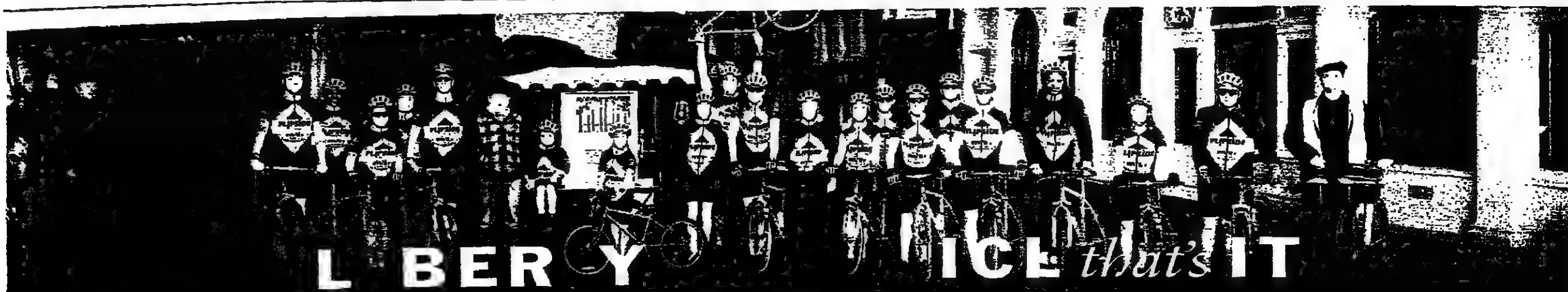
To take one example close to my heart, *Real Worlders* want a "sustainable" economy. This might avert environmental disaster. There is a catch. Low growth, plus green policies would not guarantee annual increases in personal disposable income. The formula might, however, raise the quality of life.

The trouble is that, in remembrance of our Xhosa Victoria Regina, one has to add that the "Real World" approach might be too good to be true. It might not bring back the garden of Eden. It could be that the prevailing orthodoxy, which invokes the market at every opportunity, is the least worst option, just as democracy is the least desirable form of government until you consider all the others. We cannot be certain. We can only guess.

I suspect that the hard-world will prevail over the charities' aspirations for a while yet, and certainly past the millennium. Hard-worlders have a tough answer to every question. Crime? Lock them up. Poverty? A natural effect of economic dynamism. Global warming? The scientists are not sure. Tax? Confiscation. Jesus? Carbon-dating the closed tomb.

There must be a better way. We just need a prophet to tell us what to destroy in order to find it.

* *Earthscan*, 120 Pentonville Road, London N1 9JN.



Every day, systems and services from ICL help keep the wheels of society turning. We rely on them to administer our savings. Pay our salaries, bills, insurance policies, mortgages, pensions and benefits. In short, to get on with the job. So we can get on with our lives. ICL Information Technology. IT Systems and Services that support your way of life

PERSPECTIVES

The Nature of Things

The ups and downs of gravity

Scientists have been studying the way weightlessness affects astronauts. Andrew Derrington reports

Space flight sounds like a good way to take the weight off your feet. Blasting off may be a bit nerve-racking but once you get into space you are practically free from the effects of gravity. You weigh between one-hundredth and a millionth of what you do on the ground.

But microgravity has its down side. Gravity is extremely convenient. It makes tools drop vertically and then stay where they are when we let go of them. We come to rely on this. In microgravity anything that is not held down just floats away.

Even mundane tasks that we do not think about on earth can become difficult and messy in space. Gravity is the force that makes stuff go down the toilet.

Ever since America's first astronaut wet his pants, manned space flight has provided rich pickings for lavatory humorists and a challenge for sanitary engineers looking for a lightweight substitute for gravitational attraction.

One of the Apollo missions was hampered by a severe and literally uncontrollable bout of vomiting and diarrhoea suffered by an astronaut early in the mission.

Weightlessness has another drawback: it does not last forever. The body gets used to weighing nothing. The heart, circulation, fluid balance, muscles and bones all change in ways that make it difficult to cope with gravity on return.

Since the first space flight by the Russian Yuri Gagarin in 1961 scientists have been studying the way the body adapts to weightlessness. "Long-term adaptations are very important," says Thais Russomano

of King's College London. "A mission to Mars would be technically feasible if we could overcome the human factors."

Russomano, a Brazilian who has been excited by space flight since she was six years old, came to King's to study the way the heart and circulation adapt to weightlessness. "Adaptation of the cardiovascular system is really important because it occurs very rapidly so it can have a big effect even on very short missions," she says.

The main effect of weightlessness on the cardiovascular system is that fluid is no longer pulled towards the feet by gravity. Instead it migrates towards the

head and chest, where it accumulates in the tissues, causing enlargement of the heart, swelling of the face and nasal congestion (this is why shuttle astronauts sound as if they have head colds).

The build-up of fluid in the upper body is counteracted by an increased output of urine, and a decreased fluid intake. The blood volume is reduced over three to five days.

Once this adaptation has taken place, when the astronaut returns to earth and gravity starts pulling the blood back towards the feet, there is not enough blood to maintain the circulation to the brain. Just standing up causes a racing

pulse and may even make him or her faint.

It is not possible either to turn gravity off for any length of time on the earth's surface, or to turn it on in space. The longest period of microgravity that can be achieved without leaving the atmosphere is about 25 seconds, in an aircraft flying a parabolic loop so that the G forces of a vertical turn just counteract the earth's gravity. According to Russomano, this is long enough to show how difficult emergency surgery is in microgravity (blood goes everywhere) but nothing like long enough to study cardiovascular adaptation. Fortunately the cardiovascular

effects of microgravity can be reproduced by simply lying down with the feet tilted slightly above the head.

A heroic series of experiments in the former Soviet Union, in which volunteers were kept lying down for periods of up to 200 days, showed that a six degree head-down tilt gives the best simulation, and this is what is used in Russomano's microgravity experiments.

Even six hours of head-down tilt causes a migration of fluid towards the head, increased urine output and a reduction in the ability of the heart to cope with changes in body posture and in pressure inside the chest.

When they were returned to a near-vertical position (70 degree tilt) and they performed a Valsalva manoeuvre - attempting to force air out of the lungs against a closed airway - most subjects either fainted or showed the initial signs of fainting, although none had done so before the six hours of simulated microgravity.

Russomano and her colleagues are now planning to test how simulated microgravity affects the mechanics of breathing and of blood gas transfer in the lungs.

But she leaves no doubt that, even with all its inconveniences, she would rather do her work under the real microgravity conditions of space flight. "At 32 I've probably missed my chance," she says regretfully, "but maybe if they paid more attention to the possibility of medical emergencies my MD might help me get selected."

■ The author is professor of psychology at the University of Nottingham.

Encounters / Kieran Cooke

World where fairy tales come true

Stacey is an unlikely sort of character to bump into in an art gallery, unless he happens to be dressed in a balaclava, sporting a screwdriver in one hand and a torch in the other.

Yet there he was in Dublin, face like a spring plum, a suit which even a colour-blind bookmaker would be embarrassed to be seen in, one large hand resting on his chin as he peered studiously at a Titian.

"Some of this stuff is not half bad," says Stacey. A pixie of a woman in a large velvet hat purred at his side. "She has education," he says. "She's opening my eyes. It's love I tell you."

He gives a bloodshot wink in the direction of the hat and leans forward. "And for good measure she has plenty of doah. Loaded with it." (Eyes bulge, arms describe large amounts of currency.) "Estate in the country, horses, a driveway like the M26."

Stacey belongs to the old-fashioned section of the criminal class. The type of thief who appeared in the black and white films. A lovable scoundrel. "It's a fair cop guy," he would have said as the man from the yard laid a black gloved hand on his shoulder.

The last I had seen of Stacey was selling teddy bears and Christmas trees on a bright June day outside Hammer-smith tube station in London a few years back.

Stacey had dropped out of sight owing to some compulsory time served at Her Majesty's pleasure. "Just a spot of porridge at the holiday camp," is how he cheerfully described it.

As we strolled from the Canaletto to the Murrillo he told the tale of his latest contretemps with the law. The hat hugged Stacey's arm at the more touching moments of the story.

It started innocently enough. Through some computerised oversight in a particular branch of government Stacey suddenly found his account blessed with a bonus of £47,000.

After recovering from a near coronary Stacey pondered his options. "Now of course, I could have rung up the boys at the department and pointed out the gross error that had been committed and ask them to please come and take their filthy pile of lucre back."

"Or I could just keep mum. Now you know me, I don't like any fuss. (Shoulders are shrugged innocently, eyes go skyward while a heavily nicotine finger is placed alongside nose.)

Stacey has always believed in the merits of education. The money came in handy to real-

ise his ambitions for his son, Reginald. Armed with his computerised windfall, Stacey sent Reginald to one of England's top public schools.

The years go by. "Reginald is coming on nicely, talking posh and doing well at his sums and the rest," says Stacey. "I had some bad luck on the horses. Then the school bills started mounting up. It was like pouring concrete down some great hole." (Stacey throws up his arms in horror. A Rodin sculpture has a lucky escape.)

"I begin to think it's better to just get Reggie some elocution lessons and use a handy little photocopier to forge a few 'O' and 'A' certificates. I go to the school principal and tell him how circumstances are getting a little difficult."

"Exactly what business might you be in, Mr Stacey?" he says to me over the sherry.

"Well, I said, 'I'm in the

'I was nabbed with enough dodgy duvets round my neck to unfreeze the Alps'

wet fish and veg business myself."

Stacey describes how the principal picks an unseen speck of dust off his gown, then gazes for an extended period out of the stained glass study window, and says: "The only thing I can suggest is that you sell more fish Mr Stacey."

Stacey, shaken but unbowed, took another course. Just one more little job. In its essentials this involved the processing of a large quantity of duvets of dubious provenance.

A certain party reneged on the deal. "I was nabbed with enough dodgy duvets round my neck to unfreeze the Alps," says Stacey. "That and a few other things taken into consideration was enough to put me away for a tidy stretch."

We have stopped in front of a Gainsborough. The hat reads the explanatory notes.

In the world of Stacey, fairy tales come true. The hat, his solicitor's clerk, came to his rescue. "She stole my heart and opened her cheque book. Paid for my Reggie those last couple of years. Now he's thinking about working in a German bank. What a turn up."

The hat says it was all worth it. Stacey takes a critical look at the Gainsborough. He does not approve of the dogs. "Now me, I much prefer greyhounds."

scribed to that, indeed I've resisted that kind of cultural relativism.

John: And that's because art, music, literature, painting, even great television, invites wonder. It takes us out of ourselves into what is true and good and mysterious in life. The churches ought to do the same thing, but they have been afflicted, like everything else, by the same reductionist tendency - reducing God and language and goodness to what could be photographed and published in the press and forgotten next day.

Presenter: Sorry to interrupt you in full flow, but we're out of time. No time even to mention the publications of my guests, but they are well enough known. Good morning.

When Lionel Crockett was in New Jersey on business a few years ago, the wife of his US sales agent, an arthritis sufferer, suggested he might design a range of gardening tools for people with weakened joints.

For four years he had concentrated on producing a range of scissors specially adapted for people with disabilities under the name Peta (Practical, ergonomic therapeutic aids). His self-opening scissors, with continuous long-loop plastic handles, had been selling in more than a dozen countries.

When Genny, his daughter, joined him in 1991 they decided to search for a new product and it was the American trip that provided the key. "Dad has always been an ideas man," said Genny, 30. "When he came back from America we discussed the garden tools plan and he started making samples."

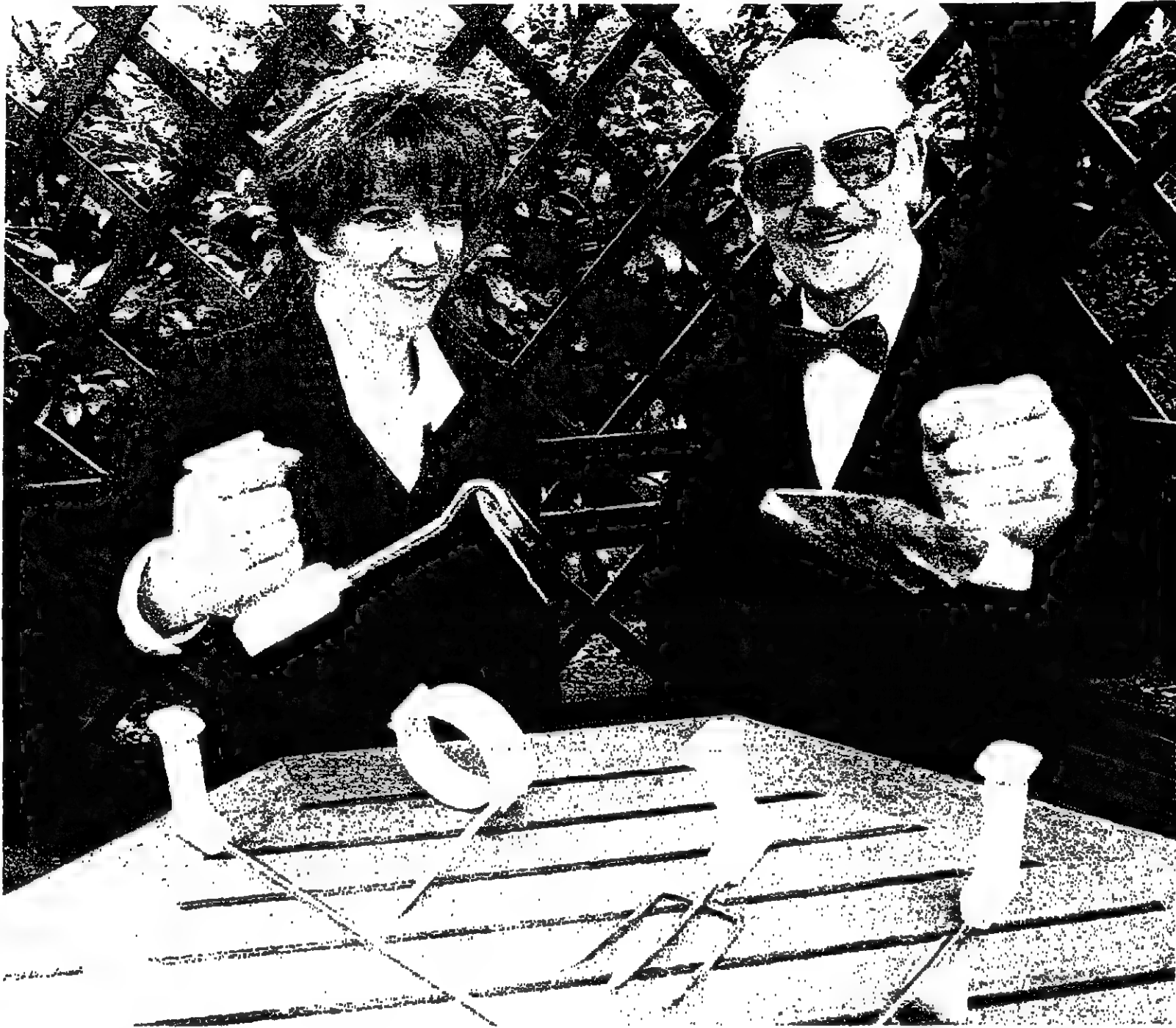
Crockett started from the premise that the way in which most people usually hold a one-handed garden tool, like a trowel or small fork, puts undue strain on the wrist and hand. A better working position is with the handle at right angles to the blade and the hand gripping it like a pistol.

From this concept he developed five hand tools - a trowel, hand-held hoe, fork, weeder and cultivator. All have a handle rising vertically at right angles to the blade, and all are aimed at able-bodied gardeners as well as people with disabilities because they put less strain on joints.

The tools, all patented, were introduced last spring. This year they appear in the catalogue of a leading gardening mail order supply company. "We believe we have found a gap in the market waiting to be filled, especially as we have such a high proportion of elderly and infirm in the population," said Crockett, 65, who started designing when he owned and ran a Southend-based company producing components for the electronics industry.

When his partner became ill and had to retire in the mid-1980s Crockett gradually drew from her job as assistant to the head of a large London management consultancy. She took over much of the day-to-day running of the business while her father concentrated on design and development.

This enabled him to perfect long-handled toenail cutters, which rapidly became the best-selling line. The next stage was to move the business from the garage of the family home at Brentwood to the present headquarters - a converted head-quarters on a farm near a village 7 miles from Chelmsford. They run it from there



Lionel Crockett and his daughter Genny with their ergonomically correct garden tools

Minding Your Own Business

A helping hand for troubled gardeners

Clive Fewins meets a family business which aids the disabled

with the help of four part-time women helpers, one home-worker and a shared telephone and fax line.

By 1993 - a year later - turnover had risen to £189,000 and business was brisk. However, the Crocketts soon found that what Lionel Crockett calls "a cheap and nasty copy" of the toenail cutter had found its way on to the market.

In spite of issuing writs and spending about £5,000 defending their product, the Crocketts decided against taking out a patent. The threat is now partly lifted, but the price of the product had to be cut in order to keep it in the cata-

logues of the leading mail order healthcare product suppliers in the UK.

Since the early 1990s all the scissor blades have been made either in Japan or Taiwan because the company could not find a British maker.

"I spent several days in Sheffield seeking a manufacturer, but no one seemed interested. I was very annoyed. I would far rather have Peta England than Peta Taiwan stamped on our products," says Crockett.

A crisis at the end of last year, when the woman who had been handling Crockett's accounts for 25 years died suddenly, meant a delay in com-

pleting the 1995 accounts. However, the signs are that last year will show a net profit of around 15 per cent on a turnover of £275,000 - a great improvement on the 3 to 5 per cent of the two previous years, says Crockett.

"During those years we had to invest very heavily in the development and patenting here and in the US on the new range of garden tools," he said. "However, we have not had to borrow - we do not even have an overdraft facility."

The new range of Peta First Grip products is now complete, with the addition of an optional arm support - a rigid

cuff that encircles the forearm and fits into the rear of the handles on the hand tools. Also new is the pack of two clamp-on handles which can be attached at right angles to any normal long-handled tool to relieve stress on the wrist and hand.

The Crocketts have scaled up their mail order operation to handle these higher value products, which they are also selling through distributors in Australia, Germany, the US and Japan. In addition they have doubled their UK advertising budget to £5,000.

The metal parts of the garden tool range are made either

in Japan or Taiwan but the products are completed in this country, by the Essex company that makes and fixes the plastic pistol-grip handles.

"It is a neat solution because we do not want to get highly involved in production," says Crockett. "It leaves Genny free to run the company and means that I can spend most of my time at home and stick largely to what I enjoy most - designing new products. We have several ideas in the pipeline."

■ Peta (UK) Ltd, Mark's Hall, Margaret Roding, Chelmsford Essex, CM6 1QT. Tel: 01245-231811.

Gardening, Page 6

Continued from Page 1

sort, put about by one of your bishops.

Presenter: They're not my bishops.

Luke: ...is just absurd.

Presenter: Now that you've mentioned the bishops, what do you think of today's Church?

All: Not a lot.

Matthew: No, that's not really fair. But I doubt whether Jesus ever intended to found the kind of institution the Church has become today, all that fancy dress, and end-

less meetings and so much time and money spent on its own life. It hides what matters.

Presenter: Which is?

Luke: The same as it's always been - love God and love your neighbour as yourself. That's it.

Matthew: You could put the same thing in a different way. It's to believe and trust in God, to worship and share in communion with other people, and to work for justice.

Presenter: Well, I'd like to come to the heart of Christian belief in God - the resurrection. Mark, the ending of your account puzzles me. You end with the women trembling and astonished at the resurrection, and your last word is a con-

junction. It's such a dreadful anti-climax, and bad grammar!

Mark: It's not such an anti-climax. Fear and astonishment are an appropriate response to an event as shattering as the resurrection. But I'm not such a bad writer that I would have ended a sentence with a conjunction, let alone a book, and in fact I didn't. I ended with an account of a meeting between Peter and Jesus, a simple, quite moving account of Jesus sorting out the mess Peter had made when he denied him. It's disappointing that it got lost, although John ends his gospel with a similar story.

Presenter: Matthew, you mention rocks splitting and graves opening, and other

strange happenings at the time of the resurrection which the other three leave out.

Matthew: That's just a way of saying that there is an act of God. I simply added a few more things that people wouldn't be able to explain, to emphasise that the resurrection was a supernatural act.

Presenter: So you'd agree with the former Bishop of Durham when he said that the resurrection was not just a conjuring trick with bones.

Matthew: Well, that's a marvellous phrase, what I suppose you'd call a soundbite. And it's true. The resurrection didn't just magically restore Jesus to the same state he'd been in before he died. He was utterly

changed, translated to a new kind of life. It is, in the literal sense of the word, a mystery.

Presenter: Then what do you make of the comment of the present Bishop of Durham, that if there had been a camera there at the time, it would have recorded that something happened, that the resurrection was photographable?

John: Frankly, I think that's just ridiculous. I don't think any of us has the first idea of what happened.

Mark: And we've no idea of what happened to the body. The most I could record was that Jesus died, and was buried, and that the women went to the tomb and found that he wasn't there.

Luke: The most that can be proved, as a matter of history, is that the followers of Jesus were transformed, from a group of frightened, defeated men and women into courageous and confident people, and they said it was because God had raised Jesus from the dead. But one of the major differences between our time and yours is that you can now explain and control so much.

We couldn't. Most people then believed in God, or some deity, who was in charge of all the forces they couldn't manage.

Presenter: So are you saying that belief no longer matters.

John: No, I'm not - but then, to borrow a phrase, I would say that wouldn't I. You seem

to believe now that the only reality is that which you can understand and control - or that you soon will be able to understand and control. That distorts the truth about life just as badly as ignorance and superstition did in our day. We did at least retain a sense of wonder, a sense of mystery, whereas you have reduced life to technology.

Matthew: And once you lose a sense of mystery, or turn God into another control mechanism who can be manipulated if you say the right things, your sense of what is good and bad also begins to erode - so you have people arguing that Hitler is as good as Beethoven.

Presenter: I've never sub-

Chess No 1122: 1 Rd3 Kd4 2 Bx5 Kd5 3 Rd4 Kd6 4 Rf4. If 1... Kd2 2 Rd4 Kf1 3 Rf2 Kd1 4 Rd1. No 1121 (from last week): 1 Qd8. If 2 Qh1+ Kg5 3 Qd8 Kf5 4 Qd5. If Kg2 2 Qd8+ Kd3 3 d5 and 4 Qd2.

سكرا من الاميل

PERSPECTIVES

Poncho politics in the Andes

Stephen Fidler goes on an eccentric tour with Alberto Fujimori, the popular and pragmatic president of Peru

President Alberto Fujimori flew in from Lima on his new jet and stepped down on the tarmac at Juliaca airport, high in the Peruvian Andes. As usual in the mountains, he was wearing a poncho and knitted hat, traditional Andean Indian garb.

This looks incongruous at first but after a while one gets used to it. Fujimori, after all, shares Asian ancestry with the people of Andes. His parents arrived as poor fishing people from Japan in the 1930s; millennia before, the Indians' forebears crossed the Bering Straits from Asia.

A former university rector who emerged from nowhere to win the 1990 presidential elections, Fujimori subdued Peru's twin scourges of the 1980s: terrorism and inflation. It won him immense popularity and, after last April's elections, a second term in office until the year 2000.

He elicits powerful feelings. His critics, many among the intellectuals of Lima whose influence has waned since he took over, worry about the way he has concentrated power in his own hands. He is, says one, "isolated, opaque, erratic, excessively preoccupied with short-term popularity and intolerance".

An agricultural economist undergoing a very public divorce, Fujimori acknowledges no debt to any book, philosophy, historical figure or economic model. It is rule, he says, by pragmatism.

He also seems to be on a permanent election campaign. He travels ceaselessly, cutting ribbons, inaugurating schools, giving speeches and shaking hands.

Using his new Boeing 737-500 or military helicopters and transport aircraft, he travels as if he had an aviator's licence and his Christmas cake presidential palace. It is, he says, part of his mission to solve Peru's problems.

Peru has tens of thousands of problems but Fujimori has his notebook. "I've got this little book," he told us. "What do I see in it? I see they're putting corrugated iron roofs on schools in the highlands, when the roofs are ideal. I've corrected this already. Every school in the highlands: tile roofs."

We had asked the president for an interview and were invited on a trip to the Andes. Fujimori regularly takes foreign journalists on expeditions, but one has to be careful. One CNN reporter was embarrassed by her appearance dancing with the president on the evening news bulletins in Lima.

Fujimori sat in the front seat of a four-wheel drive, placing me and an FT colleague behind him and the driver. Further aft, suffering an acute lack of legroom, were Peru's minister of energy and mines and his technical chief. "My ministers take a back seat," laughed the president, whose autocratic style does not allow for rivals. We all laughed, including the minister.

In the next vehicle were the *chicos*, the female television interviewers who follow the president. Behind them were an assortment of television cameramen, officials, journalists and military men.

"What's the name of that restaurant I like here?" asked the president of his aide-de-camp. Ten minutes later, 30 of us dropped in unannounced on El Trujillano, proprietor Ricardo Honores, generating 15 minutes of almost total chaos.

Fujimori disappeared, eventually summoning the FT into the kitchen, where he was stirring pots and generally distributing advice about food preparation. "The president of the kitchen," he told us.

A night-time journey by road, from Juliaca to Puno, on the shores of Lake Titicaca, would have been too risky a few years ago. Now terrorism is under control, the 45-min-

UTERLIN DEL PERU



My ministers take a back seat: Alberto Fujimori, ceaselessly on an election campaign in Peru

ute trip is once again possible.

The conversation on the way was a mixture of the banal and the extraordinary. We asked about how the government might deal with Peru's discredited judicial system, over which he caused an international outcry in 1992 when he shut it and the Congress down. He pondered before responding: "Close it."

We talked about the university in Puno, once a stronghold for the Shining Path terrorist movement, and which we were to visit the following day. "Everything at the university is fairly quiet now," ventured the driver. "Totally quiet," corrected the head of state.

Eventually, sometime before midnight, we boarded a rather ancient launch on Lake Titicaca, the world's highest navigable lake. A dozen or so of us, and the president, sought refuge in the cabin from the pouring rain. He ordered his aide-de-camp to bring out the scotch whisky, which we sat around drink-

ing out of plastic cups, except the president who had a glass with a little white napkin around the base. While in Puno, he had persuaded a local beauty queen to come along. Not long into the journey, she looked preoccupied and asked for a mobile phone. "My mother doesn't know where I am," she explained.

We were heading for the Uros islands, a group of man-made settlements floating on the lake. The fragile villages are built on reeds that are constantly sinking. Every week, the villagers who also make a meagre living from fishing and tourism must harvest more reeds to keep the islands afloat.

The village was pitch black and asleep when the president of the republic and his entourage arrived. With the rain still falling, we trooped soggily to our quarters, three straw huts with two beds and rudimentary bathrooms. Built for tourists, they were pledged by Fujimori on one of his three

previous visits to the Uros.

The president made certain he did not end up spending the night with his cabinet colleagues. "The *chicos* come with me," he said, presidentially disappearing into his hut with three television interviewers. I shared quarters with the minister and his aide, who generously insisted he sleep on a mattress on the floor.

We arose two hours before the president. The minister kept returning to his bed for a nap, and jumping bolt upright and running outside when it seemed Fujimori might emerge. After breakfast, Fujimori presented the islanders with 42 solar panels, bringing electricity to the islands for the first time.

The president told the *chicos* they were never called anything else - that he wanted to be interviewed about family planning. The big issue in Peru was privatisation but he told them: "I don't want to talk about privatisation till Friday."

The *chicos* always accompany the president on his travels, at home or on his 60 trips abroad. It is a grueling schedule, following the leader as he moves from rainforest, to coastal desert, to cold mountains.

Fujimori himself has grown accustomed to altitude, no longer needing the oxygen he used to take surreptitiously to sustain him. Some of the *chicos* suffer headaches and nausea.

They may receive a presidential call any time - one calls him "Presi". Their interviewing style is unaggressive, full of questions such as, "Mr President, what is your current message about family planning?" Their relationship is amusing to watch, though its effect is that Fujimori dominates the news broadcasts, and thereby virtually controls political debate.

In the house that followed, Fujimori helped to row himself back to Puno, named a boat, spoke at the university, lunched with local nota-

bles, and joined a troupe of street dancers, before inaugurating the airport terminal building. All the time he soaked up adulation, waving, shaking hands and plunging into crowds, a nightmare for his bodyguards. "We want to be ruled by Japanese," shouted one Aymara woman. Hundreds of people shouted "Chirilo" - Little Chinaman - as we passed.

On all of this, Fujimori thrives. He seems to love these trappings of power so much it is hard to see him voluntarily relinquishing them. Most Peruvians think he will change the constitution (for a second time) and run for a third term.

His critics fear he will go on until he fails and that, given his domination of the country, that will be bad news for Peru. Says political scientist, Francisco Sagasti: "Fujimori is a tragic figure in the Greek sense of the word. The characteristics that make him successful conspire against him."

Life on the canal is looking up

David Lascelles discovers derelict areas of Birmingham city centre are being transformed

People who know their way around Birmingham get to recognise small red trap doors on many of its bridges. These are an indication that the bridge passes over a canal; the red door is there to allow firemen to pass their hoses through and pump up water.

There are a lot of red doors in Birmingham, because there are a lot of canals. The city owed much of its early industrial growth to its position at the junction of canals feeding in from all directions of the Midlands.

Today, that is a mixed legacy. Go to Digbeth, a short walk to the south-east of the city centre, and you will see the classic run-down urban canal scene. Dingy, decaying brick buildings lining the canalside, rubbish in the canal and floating on the surface. Factories, alive and dead,

railway viaducts - it looks very depressing.

But look closer, and the history is still visible. A tall angular red brick building overlooking the canal junction has some fine period features: it is the old Proof House built to test ammunition two centuries ago. Nearby, a wide roof reaches out over the canal, supported by cast iron classical columns: the Warwick Bar where tolls were collected from passing canal traffic.

Further along, a large warehouse looms over the water. Peering inside, one sees that it has already been converted into modern offices.

Digbeth is an area earmarked by the city council

and British Waterways for revival. BW, a state-owned company which gets a 50m-euro subsidy to run the country's canals, has already spent money to restore the bridges and towpaths. The next step will be to entice investment to restore the neighbourhood's heritage.

The possibilities awaiting Digbeth are visible in other parts of Birmingham where a variety of initiatives have transformed stretches of canal from industrial wastelands into areas where people are pleased to live and work.

To the east of Digbeth, another desolate area of canal was taken over by the city council's Heartlands

Development Corporation for new housing. What was once a slum area is now a cheerful-looking community of 1,000 houses clustered round the canal banks - Bordesley Village. A new bridge, modelled on the fine arching cast iron bridges of yore, connects the houses to a new shopping centre which is taking shape on the other side.

"The canal was a vital part of the concept," said Jim Beeson, chief executive of the corporation. "People want canalside sites." This advance from the days when canals were shunned as insanitary has reopened opportunities to live near the city centre, something that has not

generally been possible since slum dwellers were moved out to suburban council estates.

To the north of Bordesley, the corporation is trying to redevelop the area round a picturesque set of locks and bridges at Aston. The atmosphere there is more industrial. British Gas has a large terminal with gas holders, and the locks themselves give it a businesslike air. But a hotel has already been built, and the corporation is trying to lure in industrial occupants. The beautification includes cladding a large modern concrete bridge in more appropriate red brick.

Stewart Stacey, chairman of Birmingham's planning committee, describes the canals as "miles of opportunity". His showpiece is the area round the Gas Street Basin, once a derelict site at the heart of the city, now a striking redevelopment with a strong period atmosphere which has become a draw for the city and its visitors.

The canalside site includes Birmingham's new Symphony Hall and dozens of restaurants, shops and pubs. Across the canal, the Brindleyplace development will offer a National Sea Life Centre, alongside offices shops and housing.

In the surrounding stretches of canal, the old industrial

sites have been restored and reopened for leisure pursuits. Something of the atmosphere of the early canals has been recaptured, and the project won an important international award last year, competing with other large waterside redevelopments in places like Baltimore.

The key to generating the new investment was the work done by BW to dredge and clean the canals, which were thick with rubbish and contaminants, accumulated over two centuries. Once the water was cleaned up, it was stocked with fish. Suddenly people realised it could be a pleasant place to visit.

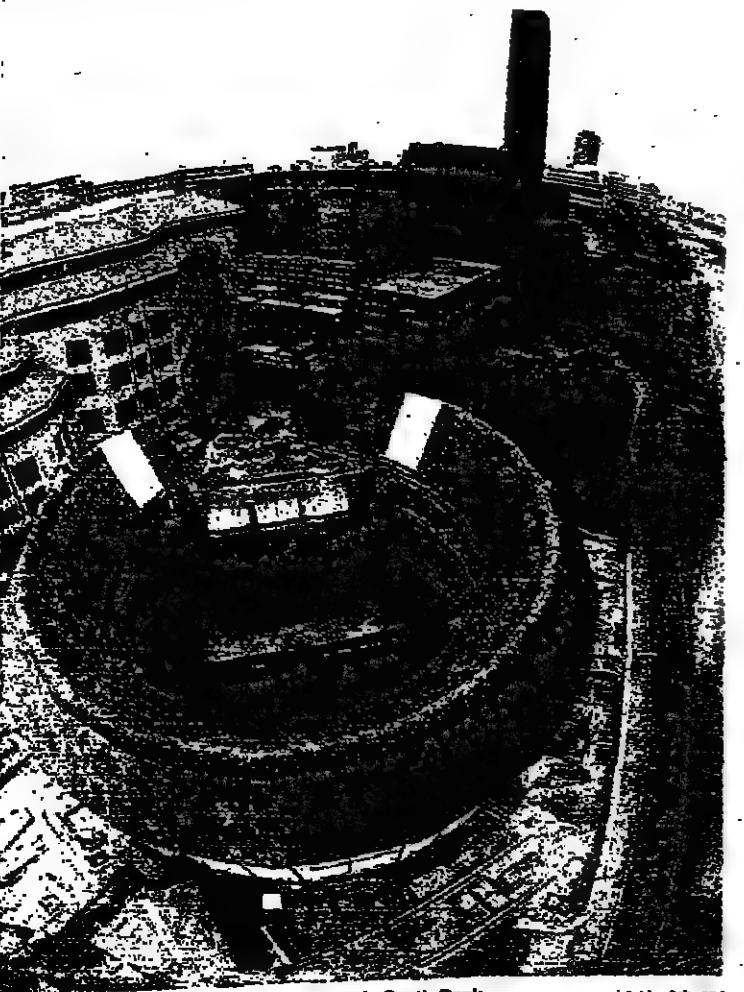
A similar regeneration has

been taking place in nearby Coventry, where the canal basin close to the city centre was redeveloped last year for leisure and offices. The 5-mile link between the basin and the main canal network to the north is also being smartened up. "This was one of the worst areas in the city," says Duncan Sutherland, director of city centre development. "Now, we see the canal as the economic regenerator of the whole area."

These schemes are part of a wider programme at BW to use canals as the basis for urban revival. Bernard Henderson, the chairman of BW, says: "Canals are a vital element in the long-term sustainable regeneration of most of Britain's major cities and towns. BW's policy is to work in partnership with local authorities and the private sector to secure grants that will help fund projects to benefit local communities."

Shakespeare's giant jigsaw

The greatest challenges are still to come in reconstructing The Globe, says Clive Fewins



Historical accuracy: The Globe on London's South Bank

In a huge hangar at the former cruise missile base at Greenham Common, near Newbury, in Berkshire, carpenters are working on the last part of the giant wooden jigsaw that is the reconstructed Shakespeare's Globe theatre on London's South Bank.

The size of the huge oak timbers needed for the tallest posts, the two exterior staircases, modelled on a former royal hunting lodge in Epping Forest, the tiring house (backstage area) and the roof over this area and the stage presented a problem for master carpenter Peter McCurdy and his team.

They ran out of space at their workshop, a barn complex at Stanford Dingley near Reading, where the rest of the structure was created. The hangar, which used to house P-11 fighter-bombers, is big enough to take two full-size reconstructed Globe theatres. Nevertheless it is almost full of fresh-sawn English oak for the remaining timberwork and flooring of the theatre, which will eventually have a capacity of 1,400 seated and standing.

Thousands of meticulously hand-cut joints will hold the structure together. "The vast majority of the estimated 2,000 joints are unique to one another," said McCurdy, 45. "Many of the joints are of the same type but, just like the original structure, every mortise is cut for its own tenon."

Achieving this has been very complex. Each of the huge "frames" of oak that form the 30-sided structure, Shakespeare's wooden O, is scribed, cut and referenced at the McCurdy workshops or the Greenham Common hangar. Then the individual frames are assembled to make sure everything fits together, disassembled and transported to the riverbank at Southwark.

This process has gone on since 1992, the year after McCurdy and company were appointed specialist builders of the main auditorium. Gradually the three-floored structure, with its jettied (overhanging) round oaken galleries, has risen to form its now familiar thatched-roof profile on the South Bank, dwarfed by the neighbouring Bankside Power Station.

In August and September 1995 The Globe ran a workshop season. The first full-length production will run for three weeks starting in the last week of August this year.

But for McCurdy the greatest challenge is still to come. While it was possible to build up a picture of what the main structure of the original Globe looked like from archaeological and contemporary reference, there is virtually no evidence to show what the stage structure and tiring house behind it and the areas above looked like.

For that reason - apart from financial constraints - it was

thought wise not to start detailed work on the tiring house until the resident company, under artistic director Mark Rylance, had assessed the merits of the temporary stage.

Last summer the actors found that the 33ft distance between the two large temporary columns on the stage that will eventually support the huge oak roof was too wide. It meant the pillars were too near the edges of the stage, restrict-

ing the actors' access to the stage. The tiring house and structure above this and the stage had to be redesigned to allow for a 27ft 6in gap between the pillars. This in turn means a cantilever (overhang) of about 8ft on each side of the two huge oak columns that support the structure. An oak tree was found - part of a stand near Hereford planted after the Battle of Trafalgar - capable of producing a beam 4ft long and of sufficient girth to do the

job. "Unlike much of the rest of The Globe we have no historical precedent for designing this, as we have no known reference for a cantilever of this size," said McCurdy.

He is familiar with the design of most of the timber-framed historic buildings in Britain, and has been looking at the design of market halls with medieval roofs and the tie-beam roof at Abbey Dore, Herefordshire, which dates from 1630.

Discussions over the tiring house roof continue. "We are faced with not so much an engineering problem as one of historical accuracy," said McCurdy. "We must solve it in a way that has historical credibility and does not undermine the historical methodology and the integrity of the rest of the building."

Jon Greenfield and I are working through one or two ideas we have developed to see if they can be made to work and if they are historically justifiable. We expect to be working again on the main part of the structure by the early summer."

It is known that there was a simple trap, used for raising and lowering stage machinery, and also a painted area - the "heavens" - that formed the ceiling 33ft above the stage. But beyond that McCurdy thinks the room above the stage was a simple structure, and that it was probably used for storage.

"With no buildings to copy and no library with copies of drawings

from 1599 it is a question of piecing together bits and pieces from everywhere," McCurdy said.

"I call it a conjectural and not an authentic Globe. But the irony is that, being a few hundred yards from the original site it is probably in a better place."

One concession to modern fire and safety demands is that there will be two more oak staircases, unseen by the audience, each in a hidden corner of the tiring house, on each side of the stage.

There is also a fire sprinkler system installed in the thatch. This was needed to obtain planning permission for the first thatched roof over a timber structure in London since the Great Fire of 1666.

"We feel matters of public safety are one of the legitimate areas of compromise," McCurdy said.

"After all, bearing in mind that building has been in progress on the theatre since 1993 and on the site for nine years, we do not want the reconstructed Globe to suffer the fate of the first one, when in 1613 a spark from a cannon during a performance of *Henry VIII* ignited the thatched roof and the whole building burned down."

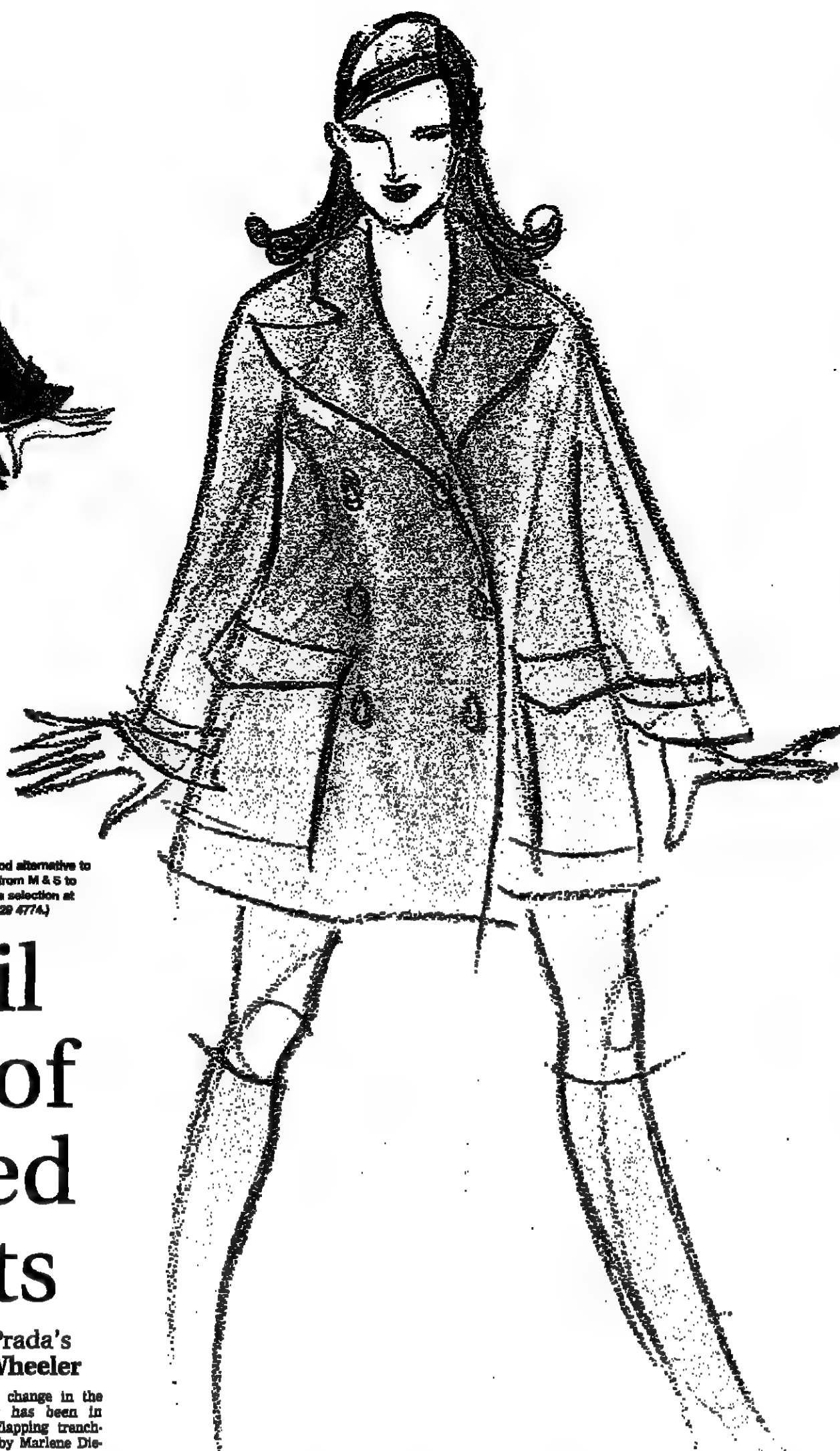
■ Shakespeare's Globe, Bear Gardens, Bankside, London SE1 9EB Tel: 0171-620 1022

■ McCurdy and Co, Manor Farm, Stanford Dingley, Reading Berks RG7 6LS Tel: 01734-744866

FASHION



Black zip-up raincoat, £336, by Ramowear. This would make a good alternative to Prada's black nylon raincoat - versions are available everywhere from M & S to Benetton. High-tech fabric makes it strictly for modernists. From a selection at Joseph, 28 Sloane Street, London SW1. (Stockist inquiries: 0171-628 4774)



Lime green, unlined A-line raincoat in treated nylon, £440, by Georges Reoth, from 181-182 Sloane Street, London SW1. (Stockist inquiries: 0171-235 3343.) This looks very good on and hangs beautifully at the back. It comes in a great fabric (although the lime green might date) and has clear Perspex buttons. Optional belt.



Pink pearlescent PVC raincoat, £226 by Aquascutum, 100 Regent Street, London W1. (Stockist inquiries: 0800-282 9223.) This high-shine raincoat combines quality and function with a sharp injection of style. It is double-breasted and a good length, but it is cut a fraction on the big side so looks best cinched at the waist.

An April shower of revamped raincoats

Things have moved on from Prada's black nylon mac, says Karen Wheeler

Looking at the latest crop of high-tech, super-stylish raincoats, it is hard to believe that the humble mac once stood fast against the demands of fashion. It was required to be waterproof, windproof and practical - but fashion never entered the equation. How times change. Ever since designers such as Donna Karan decided to revamp the raincoat - even suggesting that it could be glamorous enough to be worn out at night - the stalwart of the British spring has become a hot fashion item. And where once the very word raincoat meant a classic belted trench (lasting a lifetime), now styles change like the weather.

The greatest sea change in the past two seasons has been in length. The ankle-flapping trench-coat made famous by Marlene Dietrich and Katharine Hepburn has been eclipsed by a sportier, three-quarter length style suited to dashing around town. And while the traditional mac was pale-coloured and made from stiff, starched cotton, the latest styles come in a wondrous selection of colours (from pearlescent pastels to acid brights) and feel-good fabrics.

Even the most traditional of raincoat-makers have adopted more adventurous styling. Burberry has given its coats a new lease of life by introducing shorter styles in hot, citrus colours - lemon yellow,

flame orange, cherry red and lime green. Aquascutum, meanwhile, has overhauled the image of both its Regent Street store in central London, with modern interior decor, and its range - with raincoats in pearlescent and satin effect fabrics.

"We decided that colour, lighter fabrics and proportions were the key to a younger clientele," says

Aquascutum chief executive James Pow. The average age of the Aquascutum customer has dropped from 50 to 35, 65 per cent of the range is now fashion led, and sales have increased by 40 per cent. "The latest fabrics, particularly from Japan, are very scientific and can actually retain heat from the body during the day," says Pow. "Micro-fibres

have also moved on, with peach-skin fabrics becoming sharper and crisper."

The big thing this season, though, is the high-shine raincoat. Satin-effect nylons and plastic-treated cottons are two of the most popular materials, combined with simple, minimalist styling for a futuristic look. That means buttons, epau-

lettes and pockets kept to a minimum or, in some cases, dispensed with altogether.

So, how to go about choosing a raincoat? At present, there are two distinct shapes to choose between. The first is the cropped trench or flared A-line which can be worn either loose or cinched at the waist. This style works wonderfully with summer's narrow capri pants and short, straight skirts.

The newer shape is a neat, single-breasted, dustcoat style which is reminiscent of the 1960s. Cut straight and close to the body, it looks very chic in a Parisian way - it begs to be worn with a little bandanna at the neck, capri pants and ballet shoes. But some raincoats are cut so narrowly that they do not allow for extra layers underneath and, because the styling is ultra-simple, the fabric has to be of very good quality.

Whichever shape you choose, flared or straight, it is essential to check out the rear view as some raincoats can hang rather oddly at the back.

Those looking for something a bit different should head for Joseph and check out the fast-selling designs by Ramowear, a French label. Few will have heard of it, but this is definitely a name to watch. Fusing style with function, this maker offers a varied selection of good-looking raincoats. Much of the appeal lies in the superb quality of the high-tech fabrics and, although these coats average about £300, they are forward enough in fashion to survive several seasons.

The template for many of these raincoats is, of course, the ubiquitous black nylon Prada mac which was seized upon several years ago as a must-have item by the fashion

pack. This spring, Marks and Spencer and Benetton both have versions at affordable prices. Benetton has done it in khaki nylon as well.

The raincoats shown here have been chosen for their cut, styling and quality of fabric. While ideally a proper raincoat should be 100 per cent waterproof, with specially treated seams so that even the stitch holes do not let in water, several of the lightweight summer macs featured are fine in a shower but are not designed to withstand torrential downpours.

The high street is awash with fashionable coats. Favourites include Agnès B's lime green trenchcoat in pure silk; the white PVC belted mac (£79.99) by Oasis, which is short enough to double as a jacket and sure to be a hit with the trendy; and Ramowear's white, safari-style raincoat (£299) in a wonderfully tactile, high-tech fabric.

Imprecise though it might seem, white is a fashionable choice for raincoats just now. It looks very modern over stark black but also works with this season's bright citrus colours.

One of the best-value versions of the narrow, dresscoat style comes from the Liberty own-label collection (£120) in navy satinised nylon. John Rocha offers a similarly simple style in waxed linen, while Racing Green has a lightweight, single-breasted cotton showercoat (£99) in admiral blue, bright red or stone.

Another good high street buy is Jigsaw's classic three-quarter length, fly-fronted style (£136). In a peach-effect fabric, this features no unnecessary detail and has the added advantage that it is machine washable.



Far left: Black and white fly-front gingham raincoat, £295 by Burberry, 185 Regent Street, London W1. (Stockist inquiries: 0171-734 4060.) This raincoat has an elegant, 1950s feel thanks to its swingy cut and roll-back cuffs. It is a good length - just on the knee - and is generously cut so it could just as easily be worn over several woolly layers as over a smart suit.

Near left: Yellow, single-breasted Bodmin cotton raincoat, £275, by Burberry. A fun raincoat which would brighten up the rainiest day. Functional enough for long country walks, but worn over black it would also make quite a fashion statement in town. The Bodmin - a three-quarter length, fly-front raincoat with optional belt - is Burberry's best-selling raincoat.

Near right: Gingham raincoat, £88, from Next Directory. (Customer Services: 0116-284 9424.) Stark and functional in its styling, this single-breasted, lightweight summer mac is very good value and one of the best high street buys. Not suitable for torrential downpours but a good option for wearing round town.

Far right: Navy blue short nylon trench coat, £295, by Margaret Howard, 29 Beauchamp Place, London SW3 (inquiries: 0171-884 2482). A very useful addition to an executive wardrobe and highly covetable, thanks to its luxurious, satin-feel fabric. Classic styling and colour make this an investment with a shelf-life longer than one season.



صديقا من الالاميل

HOW TO SPEND IT

Kids' clothes that adults like

Fond grandparents will queue up to spoil the younger generation with these goodies, says Lucia van der Post

When my children were small, clothing for kids tended to fall into two distinct categories: school shoes and uniforms, and dull but sensible sweaters and everyday clothes (bought largely from Peter Jones); and then there were party clothes. It was party clothes that seemed to inspire British designers to amazing flights of fancy - immaculately smocked organdie dresses, Little Lord Fauntleroy silk blouses and velvet knickerbockers, Liberty print summer dresses...

They were all beautifully made, rooted in tradition and hideously expensive, and based on the patently preposterous notion that all potential customers lived in palaces or ancestral manor houses.

When it came to sturdier clothing for every day the places to call on were few and far between.

These days all has changed. Temptation to spoil the small set is everywhere. It is now possible to buy enchanting clothes for children for day as well as party wear.

Quite apart from the arrival of Gap Kids and the enlargement of the Marks and Spencer range, there are now many smaller designers who sell their unique versions of childhood gear by mail. Many of them specialise in the childhood version of what might be called "special occasion" clothes - the sorts of thing that grandmothers or godmothers fall for in a soppy moment or that could be worn to a wedding or a birthday party - but a few offer their own more individual vision of clothing for everyday.

Tartine et Chocolats should perhaps be the dozing grandmother's first port of call. In fact, Tartine et Chocolats' range is designed by a dozing grandmother herself - Catherine Pailvin, a French woman who has turned her collection of children's clothing and accessories into a business that



Striped T-shirts (£10-£12) and denim Bermudas (£15) from Mini Boden

turns over more than £100m a year.

There is one shop in London - at 66 South Molton Street - but there is also a mail order catalogue (visit the shop or telephone 0171-629 7233 for a copy). Here are sweet-collared, puff-sleeved dresses, candy-striped pinafore dresses, gingham dungarees, embroidered sweaters - all enchanting but none of it cheap. Prices start at £80 for a dress.

Little Dragons of 28 Walton Street, London SW2, has a small collection of what seems like impossibly beautiful clothing - not to be worn when eating chocolate mousses.

A dreamy white voile dress, which would be perfect bride-maid wear, is £29, and an immaculate pale blue linen blazer for small boys is £29. But there are some more practical items as well - a gingham pinafore and strong striped rugby shirts. The clothing is available from the shop or by mail order (tel: 0171-588 8795).

Mouse Clothing is a small business specialising in hand-knitted sweaters, each of which is made to order. It has a small mail order leaflet with colour photographs of its suggested designs from which customers may choose colours, sizes and knits.



An enchanting floral dress, £12.99, from Adams' Childrenswear, 476-477 Oxford Street, London W1. For other stockists or inquiries tel: 0500-330040



Sweaters made to measure from Mouse Clothing

The designs are enchanting - creamy collared "Eton" sweaters, seed stitched navy wool jackets with brass buttons, indigo or stripey crew-necked sweaters. The sweaters are knitted by hand in England, Scotland or Ireland and are made from the best wools, so these are what could be called "special occasion" sweaters. Prices start from

£36.50. Brochure available from Mouse Clothing, 51 Black Lion Lane, London W6 9BG. Tel: 0181-563 0665.

Fans of Johnny Boden's catalogue will be delighted to hear that there is now a mini Boden version that caters for children from birth until 8. Here there is lots of sturdy practical wear at reasonable prices - red striped pedal pushers at £12,

denim pinafores at £22, charming denim Bermudas at £15, sweet red-checked rompers at £20. It is a good catalogue to look for sturdy holidaywear (swimsuits and robes, T-shirts and shorts) as well as for the prettier dresses that every small girl needs to wear from time to time.

Particularly enchanting are the sailor dress, all crisp navy

and white (£24) and the smocked dresses (£44). Designs have been the responsibility of Kate Barton. She left a career at Vogue and Laura Ashley to found the General Clothing Company which became a leading supplier of children's clothing. A copy of the brochure can be had from Mini Boden, 4 Pembroke Buildings, Cumberland Park, Murbles Lane, London NW10 6RE. Tel: 0181-994 3682.

For those who still like to try before they buy, Adams is a name to look out for. It has 317 childrenswear stores throughout Britain and delivers great design at great value - the fabrics may not be the finest but who cares when the prices are good and the clothes are soon outgrown?

Gardening / Robin Lane Fox

Tory wets run riot in my dry zones

As from Easter, my garden is programmed to rise from the dead. It needs a helping hand. The first seven years of its life have been unhelpful.

Since 1988, winters have been dry, springs dry and summers even drier. In six years out of seven, at least two seasons have been abnormally severe. All the while, the great and the supposedly good have been preaching the virtues of natural forces, of leaving life to find its level, and not interfering with a nannying hand.

At a stroke, as they used to say in the 1970s, I have attacked both problems at once. My garden will now be facing drought with a new political confidence.

In the US, France, Australia or South Africa, no such confidence has been needed. The arts of irrigation have been taken to levels which Britons never considered.

Houses automatically come with artificial arosage and an Australian gardener looked at me with genuine surprise, and possibly a touch of hope, when I told her last year that I had been married all summer to nothing better than a hosepipe.

We spray water during working hours from rain-waves and amateur sprinklers, most of which evaporates before it penetrates the ground. They run systems at the touch of a button which dampens the soil throughout the night and leaves you believing that a miracle has happened during the dark hours.

Until recently, the automatic watering of gardens in Britain has been confined to a few high-risk nurseries or even fewer millionaires.

Perhaps the climate is warming, although the one promising cloud on the horizon are predictions of a summer even hotter than 1995. Distressed by drought, I and my gardening brothers have independently fastened on Jeremy Browning of Precise Irrigation, a business which exhibits at big flower shows.

Browning, 40, knows about dry weather. He began work as a tobacco farmer in Africa and took up the installation of artificial watering for agriculture. Since 1991, he has laid out schemes for Gulf Air in Bahrain and an Arab prince in Surrey.

At last year's Hampton

Court Show, the sun glared down unhelpfully as Browning drew a diagram to illustrate the onion-shaped effect of water when spreading sideways. I recognised a fellow madman with an interest in mother nature and, this week, he and the team have been setting up the vicarage garden to cope with the next round of drought.

There are three main systems on offer. If you have an adequate flow of water, you can run micro-sprinklers in your lawn, borders and nurseries.

My lawn, borders and nurseries are of a single backbone of hose. You can judge if the flow is sufficiently rapid by seeing how many litres you can run from a tap into a bucket in the course of a minute.

Any number over 22 will give you a chance of your own sprinkler system. Thames Water manages a pathetic minimum of nine to the taps of my vicarage, no doubt because their own leaking pipe has been losing most of the supply under the nearby graveyard.

This poor flow contrasts with the rapid run in my Oxford College. There, as you would expect, the academic pressure is much more intense and we have been able to install a full micro-sprinkler system to save water and rescue the border.

If your pressure is low, you have an alternative which adds to the cost. You can install a tank and a pump to increase the flow, allowing you to water your lawn by barely visible sprinkler patterns. The extra pressure will cost you about £1,000 to achieve and you should probably allow at least £2,000 for a full, computerised system, capable of watering an acre or more of garden.

Obviously, the price varies according to the amount of flower bed, but a starting figure of £3,000 is a realistic minimum for complete automation.

I certainly will not pay £3,000 or more for watering and, thanks to Thames Water's inability, I have only two options left: one is porous, or leaky pipe, the catchword nowadays among keen gardeners. The other is dripper-pipe, better known to Mediterranean farmers.

I have steered clear of dripper systems which have a do-it-yourself bravado to them. Those of you who still send Christmas cards and sympathy to my self-built swimming pool of eight years back will understand why.

Leaky pipe is fashionable and it might seem as if your water authority has hundreds of miles of it, waiting for a new home. However, it has three disadvantages: it is more expensive than dripper pipe; the holes which leak down its length are easily choked up when you are gardening around them; and if the water authority ever improves its pressure, the pipe is likely to split.

After careful thought, Pre-

cise Irrigation has directed me to dripper-pipe instead. Its black surface is broken up by dripper-fittings at every 30cm. It can be concealed by a light mulch and the hope is that the water will ooze sideways through the soil by capillary action. Less water is used, and on the expert projection, I would not be using more than £5 a week extra if we ever come to be watered.

My 24 flower beds are now festooned with lengths of dripper-pipe, spaced 2ft apart. The beds resemble Barts Hospital in its heyday and are certainly no less crowded. The caring, however, is left to a central computer, programmed to set off each of the six zones in sequence as soon as the next drought begins.

The whole system is exciting and slightly alarming, but I recommend any keen gardener to take the plunge after the agonies of the past years.

My system is also a model of political correctness. The dripper pipe is made in Greece, which befits the first ancient Greek historian to own one in this country. My central European network of Greek drips is now zoned into areas of impeccable wetness.

Modern controls must have a simply named command system. I am advised that each zone of the garden should have its own code name. Girlfriends have been suggested, but that depends if you have six of them whose names you want to contemplate in hot weather for the rest of your life. As a public spirited fellow, I have opted for politics instead.

As the high priests of market forces seem increasingly dotty, I will show historians the way by naming my garden's zones after the most prominent, heroic Tory wets. They may feel that they fell victim to the force of the moment, but they are now supreme in four main sections of my garden: Pym for

the herbaceous border. Prior for the shrubbery, Gilmour for the roses and Raison for the delphiniums.

When intervention is needed in the cause of justice and defence of the weak, I will press the zone which they code-name and have the double pleasure of putting the horticultural and political record to rights.

The system, however, needs a commander-in-chief whose code-name can subsume the lesser wets under its umbrella. I have fought hard, and perhaps the Easter season has helped, but it seems to me that the one proper contender is Runcie who has therefore been voted into position.

On sandy Cotswold soil, even a Greek dripper-pipe is something of a compromise. However, it must be better than last year's non-shower and I may yet see Rodgers thriving in what was once the dry shade of my sycamores. Precise Irrigation has done a job which needs the closest consideration by fellow-gardeners in the home counties who are equally distressed by the turn in England's weather. Perhaps it will mark the garden's resurrection, under the zone-name of an ex-archbishop for its believing atheist's installer.

■ Precise Irrigation, The Warehouse, Reading Road, Wantage, Oxon OX12 5EP. Tel: 01235-763760.

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“I suppose more people have realised how much better it is to sell jewellery at auction; the more buyers there are the higher the prices go.”

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FOOD AND DRINK

Wine

Chips, planks and new barrels

Jancis Robinson on the latest ways of making Chardonnay even more glamorous

Now where have we got to? Ah yes, Chardonnay, every wine drinker's familiar friend, and every winemaker's passport to international recognition.

As styles in the middle ground become increasingly sophisticated, and top white burgundies and their nearest rivals are ever more robustly priced, Chardonnay continues to claim new victims in the most unlikely places.

Nicolas Catena, who owns a significant proportion of Argentina's better winemaking capacity, has already shown that Argentina can produce unexpectedly fine Chardonnay for such a hot climate. He had the bright idea of hiring California winemaker Paul Hobbs.

The new, 1994 vintage from Catena's Agrelo vineyard reaches new heights. The British importer, Bibendum of London NW1, sells it at £9, although Fellers wine shops sell it for £7.99 and The Wine Society of Stevenage list it at £8. Hobbs' less concentrated Alamos Ridge Chardonnay at £6 from all three stockists is also extremely respectable for the money.

Now the chains and supermar-

kets are muscling in on Argentine Chardonnay, most remarkably in the form of Santa Julia Chardonnay 1995 at £3.99 from Waitrose. Acids are kept high in a wine made from pergoia-trained grapes grown in a virtual desert, but the result is far from vapid. This is a lively, full-bodied, very slightly salty, prickly wine that is amazing for its provenance.

A much more familiar style of Chardonnay comes an hour's flight away across the Andes in Chile. It is heartening to see the vast North American spirits conglomerate Seagram take the trouble to import Casa Porta Chardonnay 1994 Cachapaal, from one of Chile's newest estates operating outside the clutches of the handful of dominant wine companies.

At £4.99 from Oddbins (another

Seagram benevolence) this well-balanced wine has been given polish thanks to the small proportion that was fermented in small oak barrels and aged on the resulting lees. Barrel fermentation and lees stirring is what every winemaker tries to persuade his accountant that his Chardonnay needs nowadays. Fermenting white grapes, particularly Chardonnay, in small barrels produces a pale, complex, flavoured, and particularly smoothly textured wine.

The process of fermenting fairly rough and ready grape juice in a new oak barrel encourages all the potentially rasping elements (and many pigments) in a wine to drop out of it, while prolonged contact with yeast and lees tends to form fuller, livelier, more persistent flavours. And keeping any wine in a

barrel for a time encourages the most natural sort of aeration and clarification possible.

Penfolds Organic Chardonnay/Sauvignon Blanc is a good example - a lovely dense-flavoured wine, presumably thanks to its pure viticultural milieu in Clare Valley, sans agrochemicals, but with a beautiful delicacy thanks to its fermentation in new French and American oak barrels.

The 1993 is £6.49 at Victoria Wine Cellars while most of the likes of Davisons, Majestic, Safeway and Somerfield have moved on to the 1994 or even the 1995 at £6.99. Incidentally, from the 1994 vintage, when John Gummer was still feeding his daughter beefburgers, this wine has been vegan.

But new barrels add an absolute minimum of a pound a bottle to

production costs. Hence the increasing importance of the oak chip, small fragments of oak suspended, teabag style in tanks to infuse wines with an oak flavour.

Oceans of less expensive Australian whites bear the slightly sweet, toasty, dusty hallmarks of an encounter with *Quercus fragmen- tus*. Some of the cheaper "oaked" Spanish wines of both colours positively reek of vanilla thanks to over-chipping. But chipped wines can turn into oily or bitter wines.

One increasingly popular way of splitting the difference between a quick but all-too-short-lived oak fix and prolonged natural barrel maturation is planing, literally suspending planks of well-seasoned oak in the wine.

One very convincing example, carefully described as having been

"aged with new French oak", is Cordillera Estate Casablanca Chardonnay 1995 at just £4.49 from Greenalls' Wine Cellar/Berkeley Wines, Great Northern Wines of Leeds, Côte d'Or Wines of Ealing, Great Western Wines of Bath, and Davys wine bars in London. Made by Thierry Villard at Santa Emilia in Chile, it has textbook flavours of French oak and lees contact. What it lacks is that lovely delicate texture associated with barrel fermentation - the hallmark of fine white burgundy.

Thresher/Wine Rack/Bottoms Up has a parcel of Chablis Vieilles Vignes 1994 at £9.99. Remember real Chablis? Try this intriguingly mealy, leesy example.

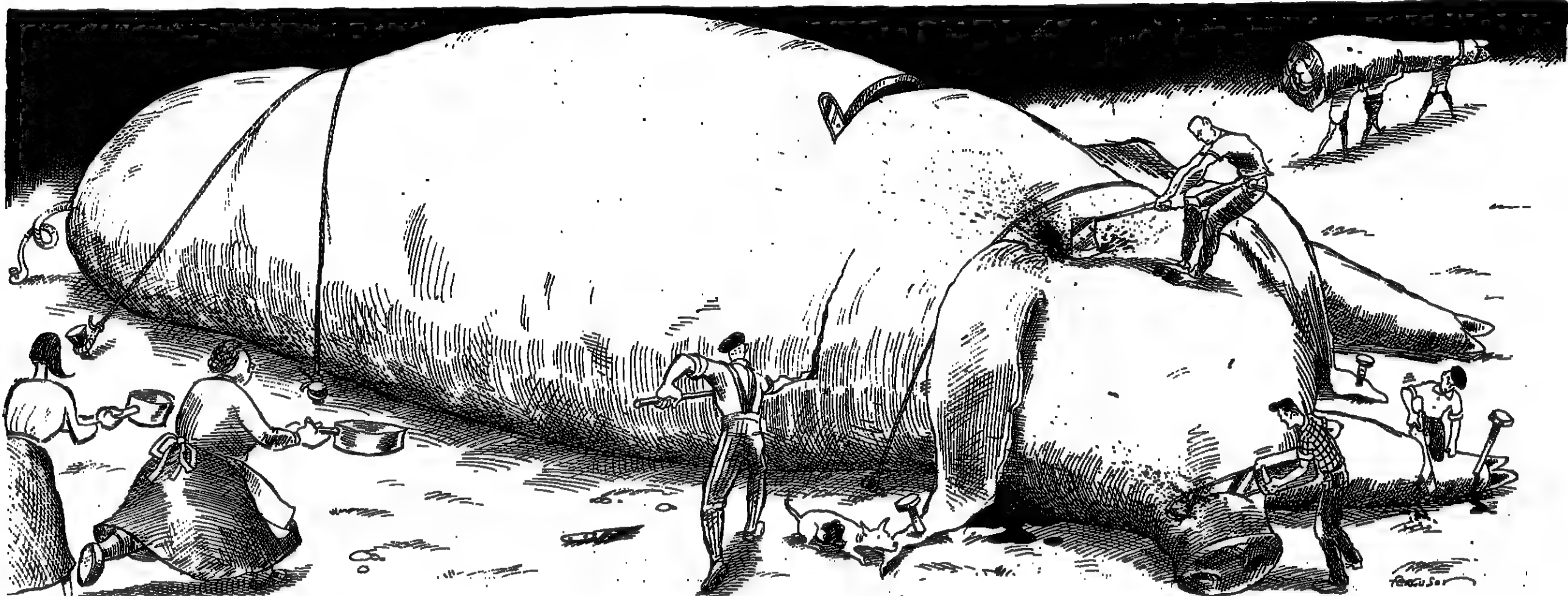
Daniel Defaix is a fine producer and just the sort we would like to see more of in our chains, please.

Cave Cru Classé of London £81 (0171-378 8579) has Jean-Paul Drouin's dense, youthful and convincing Grand Cru Chablis Les Clos 1991 at £165 a dozen (plus £13 duty and VAT) which may well outlast Colin Deleger's sneaky Chassagne-Montrachet Chenevottes 1993 at £185.

For oaky, smoky, lemony white burgundy that should develop well but also give current pleasure, Amiot Bonfils' Chassagne-Montrachet Callere's 1993 is £296 from Cave Cru Classé.

Finally, a Chardonnay that has no need to speak its grape name for its place name is apparently worth £2,353 for six bottles, or £392.11 a bottle: Le Montrachet 1993 from the Domaine de la Romanée Conti via UK agents Corney & Barrow of London EC1, who ominously describe the 1993 burgundy as "a collectors' vintage".

Total production of DRC Montrachet available to the world's most profitable wine collectors was fewer than 300 cases, so Corneys have been allocating rather than selling their share. The 1978 went for more than £500 a bottle at Christie's recently.



Forget Babe: just think about the sausages

Giles MacDonogh goes to watch the killing of his pig in southern France - a salutary reminder of the hard realities of animal slaughter

What follows is not for the squeamish. About a year ago, I conducted a small business transaction in the unlikely setting of Angelina's toorooms in the rue du Rivoli in Paris.

Over one of their famous *mont blancs*, I wrote out a cheque for a sum sufficient to purchase, rear and feed a pig until such time as it was deemed ready for slaughter. The pig was to be kept somewhere near its mistress's house in the department of Lot et Garonne in Gascogne.

For a townie like me, it is not an easy thing to kill any animal, let alone a large one like a pig. Pigs look appallingly human. Much of the time, they are far more familiar than monkeys. Just think back to the last time you took a suburban train, or the London Underground.

For a long time now, I have suspected that Darwin might well have been barking up the wrong tree, and my theory seems all the more feasible with the increasing use of pigs' organs in spare-part surgery.

Yet, I felt I was justified in two ways: historically and ethically. In cooler climates and in mountainous regions, at least, man has been killing swine for food since the beginning of civilisation.

The slaughter of the fattened pig at the onset of winter was a moment of joy to be shared by the entire village. In some countries, the party has a special name - the *matanza* in Spain and the *Schlachtfest* in Germany.

Then there is all the present fuss about meat and meat-eating which, I am certain, is a reflection of our divorce from the land and our inability to grasp the needs and traditions of simple country folk. Used to buying our food in sterile plastic trays and pots we can no longer cope with the hard realities of animal slaughter. In extreme cases we try to have it banned.

All the more reason then, I thought, to experience the process at first hand. I was in France for a fortnight around the time of the new moon when the sow (they have sweeter meat than boar pigs) could be relied upon to be off heat. A Saturday was therefore chosen for its despatch.

Killing pigs for family use is still tolerated in France, although the practice has died out in many regions. In the Garonne Valley the older men in the villages still kill pigs during the winter months.

In some parts of Burgundy, I was told, the slaughter has become a spectator sport where people pay to be in at the kill and they allow the ani-

mal to bleed to death in the presumably bogus justification that it makes the flesh taste better.

I was personally grateful for the fact that neither Jean-B nor Virginio, the two killers, thought that was the case. I went to see the beast in its sty. It was squatting on its haunches. It stared at me with what seemed to be a mixture of malevolence and distrust. Jean-B dismissed the idea, however, that the animal knew what was in store.

Another man was strutting round the farmyard. In what seemed to be a gesture in keeping with the mood of the morning, he picked up a scrawny chicken and broke its neck. He needed one for lunch, he said.

A big cauldron was boiling in the barn, he dipped the lifeless bird into the tub and carried on his conversation while he plucked out the feathers. An ancient dog limped by on three legs. He expressed the opinion that it was about time that it, too, should go the same way.

Jean-B went into the sty and managed to attach a rope to one of the pig's hind legs. We were told to keep back, as the pig might have panicked if it had seen strangers at this point.

We followed the animal into the barn where a table had been set up with knives and a plastic tub had been brought in and stationed under the system of pulleys which were to be the pig's gibbet.

Jean-B and Virginio held the pig while a second rope was attached to the other hind leg.



Remains of the day's pig in a pot

at this point it almost broke loose and both men had to hold it fast to prevent it from escaping.

Virginio held on to the ropes while Jean-B fished a crowbar. With the revolting crunching thud he brought it down on

the beast's head. In a few seconds the animal was strung up on the gibbet and both Virginio and the pig's mistress had taken hold of its head to allow Jean-B to slit the jugular. A torrent of blood gushed into the bucket.

The pig was now dead. The process had taken a minute at the most and the animal was out cold when the fatal incision was made. The pig bucked once or twice and there was a soft groan as the air came out of its lungs. These, I was told,

were only muscular contractions. The pig was taken down and placed in its wooden bath or *maï*. Resin was strewn over its skin and then boiling water. Now all three proceeded to the *derrière toilette du cochon*.

The bristles were shaved from its back and belly while a blow-torch removed those from its snout and trotters. Once again, it looked horribly human: like a fat baby in a baby bath.

Incisions to take the bar were made in the hind trotters and the pig was strung up for a second time. It was the moment to gut the animal. The pig's mistress did the honours. Once it was open it looked more familiar, like a carcass in a butcher's shop rather than the living beast of a moment before.

As we had bought casings for the sausages, the womb and intestines could be thrown to the waiting dogs, already in a frenzy of excitement. Even the tripod-bitch joined in, growling furiously over her corner of the tripe.

From the inside of the ribcage Jean-B cut *grillades* for our lunch, little bits of fillet, he assured us, while the butchers never sold. Liver, kidneys, heart and lungs were put aside and the head was cut off. The carcass was then pulled up out of the reach of the dogs and we went back to the house to deal with the black puddings.

A bowl of shallots and garlic cloves was put out for me to peel while the liver, heart and lights was mixed with the blood for the black puddings. Up until now I had felt only a slight revulsion at the sickening thud which had knocked the pig out, a mood I had forgotten once a glass of whisky was considerably pushed into my hand.

Now as I merrily minced garlic for the puddings I inadvertently sliced off the end of my left thumb, adding a little human blood to the porcine mix. That slight managed to bring out a cold sweat.

A glass of champagne brought me round, and I was able to enjoy the *grillades* cooked in the embers for the killers' lunch. My wound kept me away from the work of that afternoon. Pâtés and sausages were made from the head meat, red meat and fatter bits, and *chocol*, like Italian *coppa*, from the salted neck. The puddings, now in calf form, were simmered in a cauldron full of stock.

The next day I was woken by the sound of Jean-B hacking off chops, hams and roasting meat a few feet from my head. The work was interrupted by the inadequately explained arrival of more than a dozen girl guides in uniform, anxious to perform good works around the house.

They conspicuously ignored the by-now-atomised pig, while they cleaned windows and mended washing lines. At lunchtime the main work was over and a row of sausages was already hanging up to dry. We settled down to an excellent lunch with part of the *loin*.

The more repellent parts of the process were already far behind us, and the ham I had coveted was already in the brine tub. It was Sunday afternoon and time to leave. We took a last cup of tea before catching our train.

One of the dogs was chewing at something in the long grass: the jawbone of the hog. Now it was just a bone, already devoid of the emotive significance of the living beast we had killed only 30 hours before.

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Appetisers / Jill James

During the last couple of weeks I guess that many shoppers who had never given organic meat a thought are now contemplating buying nothing but.

This is probably good news in the long-term for companies such as Swaddles Green Farm of Somerset which produces a wide range of organic meat, meat products and ready-made gourmet dishes using 100 per cent organic ingredients. Needless to say it is not

cheap, but it is not prohibitively expensive either, and there is the added plus that it is delivered vacuum-packed, direct to your door.

For detailed prices (examples: shoulder of lamb £5.70 a kilogram, leg of pork £7.40 and whole chicken £5.60) and product list ring 01460-234387 or fax 01460-234581.

■ An Easter outing that

might appeal to the entire family is Weald and Downland Open Air Museum's traditional food fair, now in its sixth year.

A regional gathering of suppliers and retailers of traditionally made food and drink, you can buy specialist sausages, farmhouse cheeses, cider, real ales, English country wines and bread made by traditional methods.

The fair runs tomorrow and Monday and admission charges are £4.50 for adults, £2.20 for children, £11.50 family, and children under five are free. The ticket entitles you to visit the museum - 35 reconstructed buildings including a water-powered flour mill and medieval farmstead - and there is no extra for the food fair. For more details contact the museum at Singleton, Chichester, West Sussex, PO18 0EU. Tel: 01243-811348.

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FOOD AND DRINK

Cookery / Philippa Davenport

Pasta fit for clerics

Men of the cloth, I have noticed, tend to be good eaters and drinkers. I do not mean good as in careful about cholesterol levels and vitamin intake. I mean, not to put too fine a point on it, that many are greedy.

Appetite-whetting food writings flow from the pens of Anglican clerics - think of the Rev Sidney Smith and Benson Woodforde. Roman Catholic priests are more likely to concentrate wholeheartedly on tucking in; no time for diaries and essays.

Perhaps it is because the Pope denies them the pleasurable distractions of wives that, more than other denominations, they need to seek solace in the temptations of kitchen and cellar.

Some of the most knowledgeable and enthusiastic imbibers of fine claret that I have met are Jesuits and Benedictines. I know at least one parish priest who believes he could out-wok Ken Hom if allowed to take his place as television chef.

And I have dined with another fisher of men who is almost as dab-handed with dabs and other fruits of the sea as Rick Stein, chef-proprietor of The Seafood Restaurant, in Padstow, Cornwall, and author of *Taste of the Sea*, winner of this year's André Simon award.

were apparently a little too heavy, the finish was a mite too shiny so sauces should rather than cling as well as they might.

The product that finally went on sale is exquisite, boasting all the usual Spinosi quality hallmarks (rich egg flavour, bouncy texture, full-mouth feel and capable of holding cooking point well) as well as witty and joyfully exuberant shape. It seems appropriate to team this pasta with cephalopods, and I have done so twice over.

PASTA AND PESTO SQUID

(serves 4)
Seafood and pasta play equal roles in this recipe but the squid could be reduced to saucing status by increasing the quantity of pasta used by at least half as much again.

200g strozzapreti pasta shapes; 400g small squid; 100g-150g spring cabbage, preferably Primo 1 to 2 tablespoons virgin olive oil; about 6 tablespoons pesto Genovese.

Clean the squid, slice the bodies into thin rings and leave the tentacles in bunches or cut them in half depending on size.

Wash and shred the cabbage into fine ribbons. Cook the pasta in plenty of fast-boiling salted water. Steam the cabbage or add it to the pasta pan for the last minute of cooking.

Sauté the squid for one, maximum two minutes in hot olive oil. Toss in the pesto to arrest cooking and mix quickly with the cooked and drained pasta and brassica. Season to taste and serve without delay.

STRANGLEHOLD SQUID WITH TOMATO, CHILLI AND LIME

(serves 4)

Like the previous recipe, this is not a pasta dish in the usual sense. It is a generously fishy *salade Hôla*, hip-tingling or mild depending on the amount of chilli used. The squid can be cleaned and chopped and the dressing can be prepared several hours ahead, leaving only the swift simple tasks of boiling the pasta and sautéing the squid to be done just before serving.

200g strozzapreti; 500g small squid; 200g ripe, meaty tomatoes (I would use plum tomatoes in summer, Canaries are the best bet now); one garlic clove; one, two or three tiny red Thai-type chillies; one lime; a little each sesame oil and virgin olive oil.

Shin the tomatoes and cut in half. If using a non-plum variety with a high liquid content, squeeze out and reserve some of the juices or the dressing may be too sloppy. Dice the rest and put it into a shallow serving bowl. De-seed the chillies, chop them finely and add to the tomatoes together with the garlic crushed with sea salt, one tablespoon sesame oil, the finely grated zest of lime and freshly squeezed lime juice to taste.

Clean and chop the squid as described in the previous recipe.

Just before serving, cook the pasta in plenty of boiling salted water and drain well. When the pasta is nearly cooked, sauté the squid for one, maximum two minutes in very hot olive oil.

Quickly add both ingredients to the dressing. Toss to mix well, check seasoning and thin with the reserved tomato juices to taste. Serve straight away.

For stockists of Spinosi's strozzapreti, ring the importer, Danmar International, on 01784-477812.



Clerics who aspire to, but have not yet succeeded in, creating culinary triumphs are catered for by Derina Allen, the Irish food writer and owner of Ballymaloe Cookery School in County Cork.

A few years ago she ran a short course specifically designed for would-be self-catering parish priests. So popular was it that it has become an annual event.

Priests whose interests focus decidedly in favour of eating, rather than cooking up minor miracles with loaves and fishes, continue to cultivate good cooks in their parishes and they perpetuate the custom of making house visits close to mealtimes in the hope of being invited to share in the repast.

In the great gastronomic provinces of Emilia-Romagna, this custom has presumably been taken to extremes for it is said that the parish priests there are finely attuned to the sounds and smells of the preparation and cooking of their favourite dishes.

Like moths to a flame, they are instinctively drawn to any house where and when these delicacies are on the menu. Indeed, certain pasta dishes in both Emilia-Romagna and the neighbouring province of Marche are known locally by such names as *strozzapreti* and *strozzapreti*, meaning priest-chokers, because those who stuff them into their mouths furiously sometimes splutter and fight for breath in the process.

Spinosi of Marche, pasta makers of distinction, spent 2½ years perfecting strozzapreti for their range. Early attempts



The real thing: sweet rice cooked in bamboo in a Thai Market - but London is catching up on the Thai taste states

The sweet smell of Bangkok

Nicholas Lander visits Talad Thai - a supermarket, restaurant, take-away and cookery school all in one

Wednesday afternoons in Putney, south-west London, will never be the same. Although standing outside in the rain and biting wind, there was a sense of warmth, almost heat, coming from 66 polystyrene boxes piled on the wet pavement outside Talad Thai, which is inconspicuously situated in a row of shops alongside Air Malta, a pharmacy and a deserted dry cleaner's.

The boxes had been packed 24 hours previously at Bangkok airport. Now wrapping was being torn away to reveal more than half a ton of the freshest Thai fruit, vegetables, herbs, spices and flowers. There were bags of lemongrass, kaffir lime leaves, Thai shallots, galangal, red green and - best of them all - yellow chillies wrapped, for extra protection, in banana leaves, coriander, fresh green peppercorns, kachal, morning glory for stir-fries, betel nuts and Thai basil. According to chef Bruce Cost, basil is used more widely in Thai cooking than in Italian kitchens.

Another box revealed exquisite purple orchids and jasmine flowers which London's Thai community takes to pray at its temple in Wimbledon. There were big bunches of plump Thai bananas, young, shaved coconuts ready to be cracked open for their milk, guavas, Thai pumpkins used to make a sweet custard, bitter melons and pumelos as well as ultra-sweet mangoes. During July and August, when they are in season, the pavement is stacked high with durian, the foul smelling - but very sweet - fruit.

These boxes constitute the weekly shopping list of husband and wife, Plak and Pranee, who opened Talad Thai five years ago. They hoped, because of the shop's proximity to the Thai temple, they would at least be assured of a good Sunday trade.

If it were in London's West End, Talad Thai would be labelled a gastropod; there is a supermarket, a string of basic, unadorned restaurant tables that allow an unimpaired view into the kitchen where, behind five woks, stand two Thai chefs who fulfil Talad Thai's three other functions - café, take-away and, on Sunday mornings, a Thai cooking school.

I ate a delicious, inexpensive lunch: my favourite Thai soup, *kaeng som kha* - pieces of chicken in creamy coconut milk with lemon grass, galan-

gal, kaffir lime leaves and chillies - was served, followed by *goong hom pha*, four prawns, wrapped in rice pancakes and deep fried. Then came *kaeng dai long*, chicken pieces wrapped in pandanus leaves and *kaeng kao pad*, stir-fried noodles with prawns, tamarind sauce, roasted peanuts and salted turnips. With a Thai beer, the meal came to £18 for two.

As we were finishing, Plak joined us to talk about his food. He said: "When we started in 1990 it was very difficult because of the recession and because we are just a bit too far from the High Street. But our wholesale business has grown because today there are several hundred Thai restaurants in London."

The big problem is the fragile nature of all that we import. It is very, very hot in Bangkok at the moment and at least 10 per cent of what we fly in is unsaleable by the time it arrives. The only thing we can do with the coriander if it has turned brown, is throw it out. It can be even worse if water gets inside the boxes or they are stacked too close to the engines.

"Sunday is very busy with a lot of Thai people coming to see us after they have been to the temple. We also started the cookery school and we try each term to complete one type of Thai dish. Last term we taught all the different Thai curries, yellow, green, red, sour, massaman and panang, and this term it's Thai noodle dishes."

Talad Thai's business has also been boosted by the present vogue for Thai flavours and dishes in many non-Thai restaurants. When John Torode, chef at the 700-seater Mezzo restaurant in Soho, wanted lemon grass, galangal and Thai basil he asked Rushon Scranage, sales manager at George Allans, wholesalers at New Covent Garden, who in turn found Talad Thai.

Now Allans' van calls in Putney every Thursday morning

Book Review / Lesley Chamberlain Food of the gods remembered

That the Greeks knew how to live was a scholarly 18th century German dream apparently founded in reality. Andrew Dalby's carefully documented account suggests the Ancient Greeks largely ate the Mediterranean food we covet today.

Dog-eating lingered until the 2nd century BC, and odd superstitious practices still occurred, but the Greeks have evidently been enjoying wine, cheese, olive oil, pulses, honey, fruit, aromatic seeds and fresh herbs since Homer's time.

This world has been familiar in language and literature, but the gastronomy of the ancients has made its way on to our tables only recently. Now we can compare our supper with Plato's, this simple, flavour-some diet rich in vegetables seems more familiar than the food of our grandparents.

Dalby, a classicist, has done us a service in setting out the genealogy of the Greek table.

The archaic Greeks ate simply off local produce, and their diet hardly contained meat. This changed with the evolution of Greek trade. By the Classical period, culinary imports from around the Mediterranean were sought after. The Athenians, a business people with money, quickly acquired a gastronomy which Archestratus wrote down.

The newly codified art prized, among other delicacies, fish. The tuna, red and grey mullet, octopus and many other varieties of fish and seafood which characterise Greek cuisine always seem to have been as special, and sometimes as expensive, as they are today.

Ancient Greek dishes were pungent with fresh herbs and seeds, like fennel, poppy seed, sesame, cumin, coriander, thyme, dill and basil. Another source of piquancy was garos, reminiscent of south-east Asian fish sauce, but first



made in Europe by the Black Sea Greeks.

Sylphium, which has since died out (the last stem given to Nero), did important work as a forerunner of garlic. Imported from Greek colonies in North Africa, it was grated over everything savoury.

SIREN FEASTS: A HISTORY OF FOOD AND GASTRONOMY IN GREECE
by Andrew Dalby
Routledge £35, 320 pages

Imported food made for quality and variety and made your reputation because of its expense. Imports were necessary because Greek terrain was so varied, and the local soil not always good. Dalby draws the contrast with Rome, where a man showed off his wealth with fresh produce from his own farm.

Fourth century Greeks coveted local specialties because they were exactly that: goat's milk from Sicyros and almonds from Naxos. Sicilian cheese, and certain wines had a unique cachet.

A wealthy man employed his own Sicilian cook. He also enjoyed white bread. Bread was a telling social and economic indicator in a country where wheat hardly flourished. Yet it seems imported wheat was not worth the outlay.

Many people, not just the less well off, ate barley. Unlike the Romans, they enjoyed barley as their staple. The real poor ate from the hedgerows.

In this society, there were communal meals in the town hall, and private meals at home. A hired man took care of the sacrifice before the men of the family came to eat, followed by the women. Apparently any roast meat aroma would placate the gods. The ancient Greeks rarely ate beef or veal. They chose a variety of birds, fowl, and, for real

flavour, wild ass or hare.

Those semi-public occasions called symposia were male orgies which began after the main eating finished. Or sometimes the *hetaira*, the mistress class, hosted them. Along with wine and nuts for dessert came flute girls, erotic dancers, acrobats and the possibility of uninhibited sex with not-one's wife.

Plato describes in his *Symposium* how Socrates called for the flute girl to go and play elsewhere while the men talked about the nature of love. But even serious-minded symposiasts got drunk and played the wine-chucking game *kottabos*. Alcibiades, loved by Socrates, turned up the worse for wear after a symposium-crawl.

Greek apocryphal wine, though taken watered, was sweet and fortified, like retsina with sugar and a kick, so it is no wonder that they got drunk. Its potency did not frighten the married women, who had a reputation for drinking it all night, neat, in her own quarters.

In short, everyone in Athens was overdoing it and Plato, who thought it too expensive to eat two meals a day and never sleep alone at night, observed that Spartans had more self-discipline. But, as Dalby observes, the Spartans had no money.

No review can do justice to the packed detail in this unique book, drawing on the archaeology of prehistoric sites, the inventories of shipwrecked cargoes, ruined storerooms, vase-painting and literature.

It is a fascinating dip and I would have reckoned it a grand dinner had it been a little more digestibly presented, and with more spice from the philosophers.

Lesley Chamberlain's *Festive Food of Russia* is published on April 11 by Kyle Cathie (£4.99, 60 pages).

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TRAVEL

An island refuge for eccentric millionaires

Paul Betts savours the expensive simplicity of a Caribbean resort where less has always been seen as more

Father Jack White, in dog collar and black slacks, stepped out of his Japanese jeep, picked up a battered old suitcase, and headed towards Pusser's bar.

"Good morning," he greeted the early risers in a strong Irish accent. They had gathered in the pub overlooking the beach and three pelicans nosediving in the clear blue Caribbean waters of Laverick Bay on Virgin Gorda. At the end of the jetty, a red telephone box under a Shell Oil sign reminded them they were in a British dependent territory.

"It's a special day, isn't it?" the old priest said. "It's the feast of the National Apostle," he added, for those who might have forgotten it was St Patrick's Day.

Every Sunday morning at eight, Father White celebrates mass in Pusser's bar, a trendy hangout for yachting types in the British Virgin Islands. "But please don't tell all your friends I say mass in the bar. The bishop would be very angry. Tell them I celebrate it around the bar," he said with a big grin as he opened his suitcase, screwed together the three parts of his portable chalice and placed a white linen cloth on the bar between the beer pumps and the cash register.

In place of candlesticks stood two wooden statues of naked females holding globe-shaped lights on either side of the makeshift altar. Empty bottles from the night before were strewn on the tables, along with the dregs of the local rum cocktail known as "Pusser's painkiller". St Patrick would approve.

I had been persuaded to attend Father White's early morning service by Peter Shindlin, the manager of Little Dix Bay, the resort built by Laurence Rockefeller on the southern end of Virgin Gorda. "Living here is like being in a Broadway show," he said. "It's a crazy kind of place."

Eccentricity is the hallmark of this Caribbean hideaway; it always seems to have attracted the more original sort of millionaire. The first to come was Rockefeller. With his Little Dix resort he set the trend, 30 years ago, for what can best be described as luxury eco-tourism. The latest is the British tycoon Richard Branson, who built a pleasure palace on nearby Necker Island.

Like its founder, Little Dix is rich but eccentric. The hotel's manager describes it as "shockingly simple" - but with rooms averaging \$400 a night, simplicity comes at a price. Half the rooms still have no air conditioning, and many bathtubs have no bath tubs, only showers. There are no televisions, and telephones were placed in the rooms only last year. There is no swimming pool, although Shindlin plans to build a fitness centre and what he calls a meditation pool - one of those pools on the edge of a



Treasure island: with the children's centre devoid of Disney or Nintendo, young guests at Little Dix think green, with shell-collecting expeditions and lessons in local crafts provided

Douglas G. Thomson

cliff which seems to flow into the blue horizon. That is how Rockefeller liked it. "He did not want bath tubs because he felt it would insult islanders who had no water in their homes," Shindlin explained.

Now in his 80s, Rockefeller still visits Little Dix. Shindlin recalled how he saw the millionaire sweating in the midday heat under a coconut palm, calling his New York office from a public phone. He asked if he wanted to use the hotel's air-conditioned office. "No," he replied. "The best things in life are free. Few things give me a thrill these days and one of them is to call my office from under a coconut palm."

By modern resort standards, Little Dix is small. It has 98 rooms

scattered in cottages along a glorious semi-circle of white sand, backed by a sculptured garden of palms, tropical flowers, cacti and shrub. The beach is protected by a coral reef with a single narrow opening. The lagoon inside invites lazy swimming and snorkelling.

But the scale of the project cannot be underestimated. When Rockefeller bought 142 acres of land in Little Dix Bay and leased a further 365 acres of Crown land adjoining the property in the late 1960s, there were only 600 inhabitants on Virgin Gorda. There was no running water and no electricity.

The American philanthropist's idea was to develop a resort that would be consistent with his philosophies of conservation but enable

guests to relax in simple comfort in a setting of great natural beauty. He built similar properties on other Caribbean islands as part of his Rock Resorts group, but Little Dix was the jewel in the crown.

He used local stone, red cedar, purple heart, locust wood, mahogany and wallah shingles to construct his property. Later he built one of the finest yachting harbours in the Caribbean complete with haul-out, storage and repair facilities run by the hotel in the small settlement of Spanish Town.

Rockefeller sold his properties three years ago. Little Dix is now owned by Bankers Trust and managed by Rosewood, the Dallas luxury hotel group. It has spent \$10m rebuilding the place, which was

badly damaged by three hurricanes last year. Tall date palms were shipped from Israel by container ship for instant landscaping, and a Boeing 747 jumbo was chartered to bring 4,000 pieces of furniture from the Philippines.

Although changes have been made, Shindlin, who worked with Rockefeller before joining Rosewood, insisted the new management was anxious to preserve the character of the resort. The atmosphere is at times similar to a Caribbean version of Reid's, the grand old watering hole in Madeira where afternoon tea on the veranda is an institution and dinner jackets are de rigueur in the dining room.

The dress code at Little Dix is less formal. But tea is also served on the

terrace under the open dining pavilion every afternoon at 4.30. Like Reid's, the manager hosts a cocktail party for guests every Monday evening. On Fridays, guests are invited to join the director of horticulture on a tour of the gardens.

Some allowances have to be made to modern times. Only recently has the hotel allowed children under five to stay. "But we take small children under control," added Shindlin.

The children are tidied away in air-conditioned rooms with glass windows to control the noise, and cared for in a children's centre run by two teachers. There is no Disney or Nintendo in the centre and the children are encouraged to think green, with shell-collecting expedi-

tions, iguana hunts and lessons in local crafts.

On the beach, rich American and European couples whiled away the time reading, paddling, sunbathing, snorkelling, tramping up and down the white sand, indulging in all kinds of watersports. Many have been coming back for years. They include Washington lawyers, ageing Wall Street whizz kids, Hollywood producers, famous actors, English lords, honeymaners, and now families with small children.

I bumped into a young American couple who said they met in cyberspace on the Internet and were now developing their relationship. The Queen and Prince Philip also came here. Mrs Ernest Hemingway stayed. "Many former American presidents tend to come after they lose the election. When out, both Carter and Ford came to escape," Shindlin said.

Even former presidents do not have keys to their rooms. There are no keys. The island is one of the safest in the Caribbean, in sharp contrast to the nearby US Virgin Islands, which have become one of the highest-crime regions in the US. "Everybody here knows everybody and there is nowhere for a criminal to hide," one local said.

There is, however, a drug problem in the islands because of the archipelago's position as the last staging post between Colombia and the US. "A typical pattern is an air drop at night in our waters," explained David Mackilligan, the governor. "The consignment is then taken by fast boat to St Thomas in the US Virgin Islands."

Father White said the bishop nearly fell off his chair when he told him his new church of St Ursula in Spanish Town lay in the heart of the settlement's red light district. "I meant it literally," the parish priest explained.

After receiving an unexpected \$500,000 donation from a couple of eccentric Americans, Father White was able to build his church on a hill dominating the town, with magnificent views over the Sir Francis Drake Channel and other islands. Its name was chosen because Christopher Columbus was so struck by the islands' beauty that he compared them to St Ursula and her 11,000 virgins.

Father White also erected two red beacons on top of the cross on the roof of St Ursula. "I simply had to do it. I didn't want one of those small drug smuggling aircraft flying low at night without its lights on crashing into our lovely new church."

Paul Betts was a guest of Little Dix Bay, PO Box 70, Virgin Gorda, BVI. Tel 1 800-495 0355, Fax 1 800-495 5082. He flew with American Airlines, which operates services from London to Toronto via San Juan, Puerto Rico. UK reservations, Tel 01454 782702.

Languor that harboured a genius

Nigel Andrews visits Fort Myers to pay homage to inventor Thomas Edison

As a film critic I knew that 1896-98 would be a dangerous time. The world would be ravaged by 100th birthday celebrations for the cinema. Television would go berserk with Hollywood documentaries; publishing companies would release truckloads of encyclopaedias; and Britain's Lord Attenborough would rouse the nation through tears and side-whiskers.

Was there some town where one could escape such enforced delirium, just for a week or two? Some spot where one could pay respect to cinema's birthday without being trampled to death by it?

Fort Myers on the Gulf Coast of Florida was the answer. I knew it of old, a languid sprawl of rivers, inlets and palm-lined avenues where Thomas Alva Edison had his winter home. Edison picked it at the end of the last century, shortly after inventing the cinema. He was soon to pronounce: "There is only one Fort Myers and 50m people are going to find out about it."

In high season these days all 90m seem to be on Fort Myers Beach, a commercialised atoll joined to the city's outer limits by a high-arched bridge. If Edison came to this spot today he would have to jostle with the rest of America for a hot dog and milk shake. Inland, though, Fort Myers becomes a dream: genteel, spacious, luxurious. You drive towards the town centre along McGregor Boulevard, most of whose flanking Royal Palms were imported from Cuba by Edison himself in 1900. Though Florida grows similar palms in the Everglades, a boat journey from Cuba was then thought easier than an ox-cart trek through the swamps.

Edison's estate is at the top of the avenue on both sides. On the right are the laboratory grounds, which can be entered either by car through a bougainvillea-clad Hispanic archway or by foot through a wicket gate guarded by a tall tree with a raccoon at the top. This kohl-

eyed creature is in permanent residence, peering down at you from the highest fork.

On the boulevard's left, bordered by a jungle-like garden, is the Edison house. Cool white rooms stuffed with mementoes open their windows to the Gulf Coast zephyrs and any stray red cardinal, that most striking of Florida's small birds, one of which flies in and sings from a window ledge.

You can look at the house and laboratory in any order. But if you do the house and garden first, prepare for the terror of the conducted tour. You need one, since as well as inventing everything from the radio and gramophone to the electric toaster, Edison was a plant collector. The 9-acre grounds contain 400 plant and tree varieties, most of them foreign to the US.

Orchids run riot on mango trees. Frangipani and Java plum scent the air. A sausage tree and fried egg tree live in judicious proximity. Cannonball and dynamite trees - the latter is shotgun-loud as it explodes its seeds over 200ft - may help to explain Edison's premature deafness. And the Panama hat palm's fibre is, naturally, used to produce Panama hats.

Meanwhile across the boulevard, standing outside the green wooden shed that bears the historic sign "laboratory", is Florida's largest banyan tree. This root-trailing, boardwalk-threaded monster was given to Edison in 1934 by the tyre tycoon Henry Firestone.

All else besides, Edison pioneered the motor tyre. Urged on by friend-ship with Firestone and proximity to Henry Ford, whose own winter home-museum happens to be next door to Edison's in Fort Myers, the inventor grew goldenrod in his garden to make rubber. A piece of it, dated 1927, sits in awesome well-preserved state on the desk in his laboratory.

This building, a long clapboard shack painted dark green to blend with nature, is a time-capsule in



More than just a plant collector: Thomas Edison in his laboratory

Michael Ochs

disguise. Walking round it, your jaw keeps dropping at the realisation of how much this man actually invented. The guidebook, trying to keep up, contains sentences such as "he left the telephone temporarily and invented the phonograph". Edison bequeathed 1,087 patents, all of which are in use today.

You can see his experimental model phonograph, plus the first ever record, of *Mary Had a Little Lamb*, recorded on a 5in by 5in strip of tin foil. Losing his hearing in old age, Edison would place his teeth on the record player's wooden frame to catch the recording's vibrations.

You see his early mimeograph machine; his first microphone; his collection of trial storage batteries, an invention that took more than 40,000 experiments; his successful model for a miner's lamp; his patented toaster, insulated wire, electric light bulb, hair curler, percolator, cigar lighter, waffle iron, spark plugs...

Almost the only thing Edison did not invent was the dictaphone. He worked on a similar machine that he called the Ediphone. But the first dictaphone was made by, believe it or not, a Mr Dick.

The tour's grand finale is the presentation of the 12 different models of film projector, from home to commercial, all made by Edison. Here for the movie buff are the very origins of the motion picture: an art that depends on forcing light through machinery so tortured and tortuous that only a mad scientist, and only the greatest of them, could have thought it up.

Not all this brainstorming was done in Fort Myers. Edison created his "Black Maria", the first moving picture studio, up in his longer-established habitat in New Jersey. Likewise the Kinetophone, kinetograph and kinoscope. But the Fort Myers museum, in addition to its dazzling collection, commemorates the place where Edison tinkered on tirelessly into old age.

Between laboratory sessions, he perhaps went for walks along the waterways alive with herons, ospreys and egrets. Or he might have crossed over by boat to Sanibel and Captiva, pearly islands rich in seashells and flamingoes where wealthy snowbirds (American slang for winter vacationers) retire to bungalows wreathed in jasmine.

Or again Edison might have taken a longer boat trip, like his tourist descendants, into the confluence of the Orange and Caloosahatchee rivers. Here he would have strayed unknowing into a spot that, decades later, would have its own magic for movie-lovers.

A mile up the Caloosahatchee there is a jungle-like bend to which Hollywood returned again and again to film exotic B-movies. If you seek the lair of the *Creature from the Black Lagoon*, seek it not in California but here in Florida. Like Thomas Alva Edison, the creature had the good taste to make his home in Fort Myers.

Cannes in a cold climate

Logic suggests that if a French woman who knits is a *tricotieuse*, one who plays Scrabble must be a *scrabblieuse*. Signs for a Scrabble contest at the Palais des Festivals in Cannes were posted exclusively in the masculine singular, but the 300 or so contestants in the *sous sol*, silently piecing together words against the clock, were exclusively feminine.

Wandering in search of something less sepulchral, my eye was caught by a placard announcing "Scrabble Initiation Mary". Now here was surely where the action was. Well, sort of. Mary was a dignified fortysomething, teaching her clients the mysteries of the anagram and, though it is hard to see how it would earn you many points, the palindrome. "Madam," read a sign in her improvised classroom, "I'm Adam."

It is an advantage of off-season weekend breaks that you feel no pressure to do anything in particular. Certainly no pressure, though the March sun was shining at a benevolent 15°C on the *Croisette* and rash bathers braved the Mediterranean, to stretch out on one of those private beaches where, in summer, a lounge will cost you £20 or more for an eight-hour stint.

I ambled into the *Festival des Jeux* on a whim. It was being staged in a building which, each May, is home to the Cannes film festival. Outside the stars and directors have left their palm prints in concrete, as they have on the pavement outside Mann's Chinese Theatre in Los Angeles. But here they honour not just the giants of Hollywood but the likes of Arietty and Claude Berri.

Not far away an affable young man called Philip offered to write your name on a grain of rice for FF30. I remembered being able to buy a five-course lunch for less. There was no more to it, he explained, than a steady hand, a magnifying glass and a stylo with a very fine point. He could cram in almost as many characters as there are in the full title of a Spanish duke but he was otherwise a journalistic disappointment, since he could not remember penning the name of a single screen idol.

There were relatively few foreigners about. Cannes offers other

benefits in winter. There is rarely any need, for example, to book a table for dinner. In the old town, Le Suquet, some patrons spent Friday evening gazing into the steep streets in the hope of luring some hungry, passing tour group.

The weather inevitably proved fickle. By Saturday a cold wind was blowing from the Alpes Maritimes and I made an excursion to Antibes and the Picasso Museum. Picasso used the Chateau d'Antibes as a studio in 1948, and the time he spent there with his mistress Françoise Gilot was particularly happy. There is a warmth and a twinkle about the work inspired by his brief stay, above all in the fine collection of ceramic dishes and their cornflower blue grapes, fat cherries and swift paint strokes.

There was some warmth, too, in the basement of the Comic Strips Café, on whose racks I was amused to find, alongside Tin Tin, a title called *Biggles à la Dernière Zapple*.

Out on the headland among the untenanted villas of the rich and famous, the chill returned. Here is the Chateau Croc, where Edward and Mrs Simpson stayed; Jules Verne's former villa Les Chênes Verts, near the Hotel on Cap and the Eden Roc; and the Belles Rives, where Scott Fitzgerald came. In winter you can only imagine ghostly cocktail laughter on the wind.

Sunday brought rain and a trip to the splendid covered market in Cannes to buy fresh goats cheese and *bleu des Causses* for dinner that evening, back home.

Later, while stuffing my crumpling baguette into the overhead bin on the flight home, I wondered if the scrabbleboards were still at it. Then it occurred that the second person plural of "to leave" (*quitter*) would be a killer on a French Scrabble board, with the Q and the Z both on double squares.

Roger Bray

Roger Bray stayed at the Noga Hilton. Cresta Holidays (0161-988 9999) offers two-night weekend breaks there, flying with Air France. In late March and April the cost is £336 a person (bed and breakfast) in a twin room. Airport transfers from Nice are not included. A Group A hire car for two days costs £26.

سكنا من الامم

TRAVEL

The graveyard was enormous, the size of a small farm, and dotted haphazardly over its fresh green grass were hundreds of grey headstones, some tall, some short, all facing in the same direction and all without inscription.

With rugged tops like the tattered edges of torn newspaper, most of the stones looked unfinished. And so they were for, far from being a place of the dead, each one of these "stones" was a living termite mound, a high-rise city of vibrant activity.

These so-called magnetic termite mounds are only a few inches thick but about 6ft tall and half as wide. They are as smooth as a part-sucked lolly and aligned on a north-south axis in order to obtain the maximum warmth from the early and late sun but not to overheat at midday. Grass-eating termites inhabit these solar-powered homes and it is claimed that each mound consumes the equivalent of a large herbivore.

Magnetic termite mounds are unique to the region of Litchfield, a new, 165,000-acre, national park a couple of hours' drive to the south of Darwin in Australia's Top End.

Its centre is a great plateau of hard sandstone with a softer, eroded sandstone on top. Like a wet sponge on a brick, the soft rock holds permanent water and releases it as springs to tumble over high ochre cliffs into deep, dark pools in a series of picturesque waterfalls.

The result is a dry open forest veined with green pockets of monsoon rainforest which follow the course of the creeks or streams.

Overshadowed by larger and better known Kakadu, many visitors hardly give Litchfield a second glance, rushing to several of its best known falls in little more than an afternoon. And they go to busy public places with large car parks and picnic areas where steps and railings enable swimmers to reach the water easily. At one I even watched a bloated green goanna, or monitor lizard, ill-tempered and overfed, terrorise picnickers for tit-bits.

By walking less than a mile, Terry Patroni, our guide, took us away from the crowds to exquisite pools with their own glistening cascades - places we would never have found without his direction.

Admittedly, it was hot but



A water monitor, a harmless aquatic lizard, happy to bask on the river bank

A flicker of outback blue

Michael J. Woods finds hidden treasures in Litchfield National Park

We took it at a steady pace, pausing occasionally to drink fresh water from the creek which swirled beside us and, with the promise of a swim at the end, it was well worth the effort. No paths lead to these secluded treasures and Patroni follows a different route both in and out on each occasion to conceal his tracks. Sometimes he walks on bed-rock, at others he follows a pig trail.

Our destinations were not of sufficient size and grandeur to suit the masses. And we felt as though we were the first to have set eyes on some areas. Brilliant damselfishes and dragonflies darted and hovered over the water. They avoided the tough, strategically placed spiders' webs but were rarely a match for rainbow bee-eaters, gloriously plumaged little birds which darted from carefully selected perches and then returned to beat their prey against the preferred twig with quick flicks of their bills.

At one pool, two water monitors, harmless aquatic lizards, were happy to bask on the

bank and allow me to come within a couple of yards before slipping silently into the depths. Even the water, warmed from flowing as a thin skin over hot rocks, is welcoming.

We camped on a private site in the traditional Australian way, unrolling our swags or bed-rolls under the stars and carefully tucking our mosquito nets around the mattress edges.

During the day we slapped the occasional horse fly. At night, mosquitoes made long sleeves and trousers advisable. A little insectivorous bat, silent in comparison with its flying fox relatives, was a welcome visitor, patrolling outside my net and picking hungry whining insects from its folds.

After a supper of crisp fried vegetables, with steaks which covered half the plate, Patroni, who once mustered cattle for a living, explained how to deal with a troublesome bull. "You gallop alongside," he explained casually, "and grab its tail. Then you step off

your horse. As the bull turns to attack, he trips over his own front feet and goes down. Grab a hind leg, hold it up and you have him."

I fell asleep wondering how you could possibly practise stepping off a horse at full gallop with a ton of angry bull in one hand?

Near the track to our campsite was the home of a great bower bird, an archway of grasses covering its collection of lovingly collected objects. This particular species gathers white things - small shells and stones - and sometimes green ones such as broken glass.

Strangely enough I had seen one of these birds displayed at the award-winning Territory Wildlife Park only a few days before. About 24 miles "down the track", as Top Enders affectionately call the tarred Stuart Highway, which straddles the country from Darwin to Adelaide, this park sets out to exhibit only those species found in the Northern Territory.

Although the park is still in its infancy, most of the displays are good, concentrating particularly on threats to the territory's wildlife habitats.

The nocturnal house is one of the best I have seen. About three-quarters of the creatures were active and in view and even the water rats were plopping in and out of their pool, visible diving under water through the glass-fronted cage.

I always enjoy coming across the natural inhabitants of such places and, not only were fruit bats roosting in the rafters, but as I drove round the park with Leo Oosterweghel, the development manager, we came across a blue-tongued skink.

Oosterweghel leapt out and caught the sausage-shaped lizard, which has ridiculously undeveloped legs. Obligingly the skink opened its mouth and flicked its royal blue tongue back and forth, tasting the air.

As we were leaving Litchfield for Darwin a few days

later, a similar skink was crossing the road. Patroni, happily, grabbed it for us to see. This animal was not so co-operative and resolutely refused to open its mouth to reveal its most distinguishing feature. Only those with the patience to wait finally glimpsed a flicker of that wonderful tongue. Litchfield is much the same: it is easy to see the obvious but the park is so much more enjoyable if you take the time to search for its hidden glories.

Michael Woods travelled to Litchfield National Park with Wild Quest Tours, PO Box 62, Howard Springs, Australia 0833 Tel: 089-831557.

The Territory Wildlife Park (Cox Peninsula Road, Berry Springs, NT, Tel: 089-6000) is open from 8.30am until 4pm. Go early while it is still cool and the inhabitants are active.

For more details of travel opportunities to Litchfield National Park, contact the Australian Tourism Commission. Tel: 0181-780 2237.

Game Watching / J.D.F. Jones

Rough and the smooth

There are two best ways to go African game-watching. I have decided after years of exhausting research. The first is to get fit, to renounce comfort and to do it on foot in the company of a rifle-bearing guide, sleeping out either in the open or under canvas (a good example would be to book on to one of the Natal Parks Board's "Wilderness Trails"). You may not see the Big Five, but you will never forget the experience.

The second is to take a deep breath, defy your bank manager and opt for the luxury end of the market. Treat it, if you must, as a once-in-a-lifetime indulgence. Decline the conventional package tour promoted by travel agents, which typically will take you to the lion's kill in a zebra-striped Volkswagen bus - you and 100 others, lined up in a dozen identical vehicles.

There is, of course, luxury and luxury, and South Africa - for instance - has both. Consider just one area, in the republic, the cluster of private game estates lining the western border of the gigantic national Kruger Park in the Eastern Transvaal. Londolozi, Mala Mala and Sabi Sabi are venues for the international jet set and some of their prices can be stratospheric.

Just next to them is a group of high-comfort private lodges which form the "Sabi Sand Wilderness" - in Natal. Unalala, Unalala, Indaba, Dulini, Exeter. These separate operations have not joined forces so that their clients can share, according to strict ecological rules, their wonderful game resources.

The snag of the big parks (in particular, the internationally renowned Kruger) is that you are not allowed to drive off the road and are usually required to sit in a roofed vehicle. You can sometimes spend a whole day

looking at impala and the silhouette of a distant crocodile.

In the private parks on the edge of Kruger you have an open Land Cruiser (which gives you total safety from animals, so long as you do not stand up, because they have grown up with the vehicles and take no notice of them), and you can go "bush-bashing", which means that your ranger, with the help of his tracker balanced on the front bumper, can take you off the track into the thickest bush whenever he hears the grunt of a mating leopard, or glimpses the spoor of a hungry pride of lion, a shy rhino, or whatever. These things you cannot do in Kruger, for all that it is a magnificent, heavily stocked experience.

Inyati is probably the best example of the Sabi Sand lodges, with a large proportion of its clientele from Europe. The routine is familiar to African wildlife holidays: wake at dawn; tea and rusks; the morning game drive for two to three hours, crashing through the thorn trees; a giant breakfast; a game walk, unless you prefer the swimming pool; lunch; siesta; the afternoon drive at 4.30, which soon turns into the night drive with searchlights; dinner (the food and wine always four-star standard); and a very early night in your all-mod-cons thatched cottage overlooking the river. You are awakened by the dawn chorus of the birds - and the prospect of more of the same. (Walking around at night is not encouraged as there are no fences.)

It is a sordid point, but you are paying good money so they make sure you find the animals. Which is why you are there. You will probably return, bank manager or no. Inyati Game Lodge reservations: PO Box 88838, Booysebos 2016, S Africa; (011-498 0753; fax 011-498 0897).

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Executive cars that are equal but different

Stuart Marshall compares the virtues of three leading luxury marques

Three cars have been named by British motoring magazines in the past year as the best luxury executive saloon: the Jaguar XJ6, the Mercedes-Benz E-Class and the BMW 5-Series. But only six weeks after one respected monthly had switched the crown from the XJ6 to the new E-Class, it deposed the Mercedes in favour of the new BMW 5-Series, long before this was due to go on sale in the UK.

It is all good clean fun - but is it relevant? Do managing directors swap their Jaguars for Mercedes and then, almost before finding out what all the

knobs are for, realise their mistake and order BMWs? Of course not. In the real world there are Jaguar people, Mercedes people and BMW people. For the most part they stay with the marque they like. Only a small minority - the trade puts it at about 15 per cent - flits from one to another. At the heart of the matter is a simple truth: XJ6, E-Class and 5-Series are all highly covetable cars, but they are different.

Jaguar users put up with some lack of passenger and boot space but glory in the Jeremy Street ambience of a traditional British interior. One cannot get sentimental about

Mercedes, a make which majors in bank vault standards of strength, safety and durability. Younger management-level motorists are drawn to BMWs. As a senior BMW person said the other day: "If you want to drive from here to eternity and back, buy a Mercedes. But if you want to enjoy yourself, have a BMW."

Last month I drove a Mercedes-Benz E300D automatic 1,250 miles (2,000km) to Geneva and back. It held a near silent 85mph/137kph on the auto-route, dealt effortlessly with alpine passes, felt rock solid at all times and achieved just over 35mpg (8.07 litres/100km) of diesel. It rode a shade more resiliently, made less road noise and had more comfortable seats, but was otherwise typical of all the Mercedes cars I have grown to respect over the years. It was not an exciting car, just totally competent and confidence inspiring.

Last week I tried two of the new BMW 5-Series in Spain.

New and old 5-Series are essentially similar, though the sheer harmony of the new one's looks makes it the most elegant saloon BMW has produced. It manages to appear a little smaller than before but is slightly longer, wider and lower and - going against the safer-has-to-be-heavier trend - is lighter by 35kg.

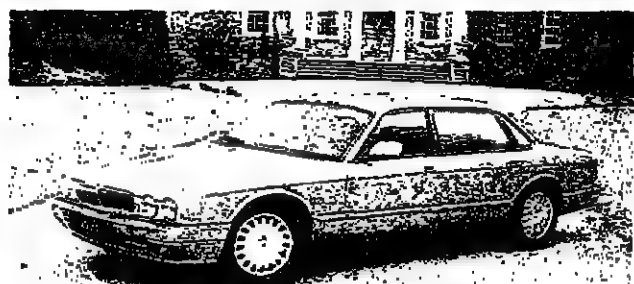
Some weight has been saved by using aluminium for many chassis components normally made from steel.

Initially, British buyers are being offered in-line, 6-cylinder petrol engines of 2.5-litres (in a model confusingly badged as the 523i) and 2.8-litres capacity. The 2.5-litre produces 170hp compared with the 2.8-litre engine's 193hp. Both develop maximum torque (in other words, they pull hardest) at modest revolutions, the 2.5-litre particularly so.

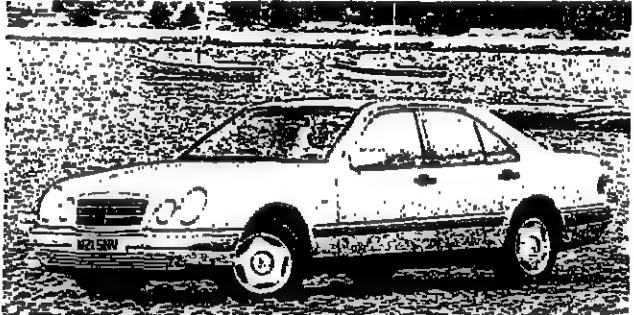
Both have split personalities. While eager to spin musically up to 5,000rpm and over, they are muscular in mid-range. So



The new BMW 5-Series: more advanced, better equipped and cheaper than the model it replaces, it is "the most elegant saloon BMW has produced"



Jaguar drivers relish the traditional British ambience of the car's interior



Mercedes models big on strength, safety and durability

Rallying / John Griffiths

A safari like no other

The vulture redefined the boundaries of optimism. Tommi Makinen was not only alive but wearing a crash helmet and driving his 300-horsepower Mitsubishi Lancer rally car when the bird dropped in for lunch, via the car's roof vents, and instead became the luncheon.

Wiping blood and feathers from car and overalls, Makinen could reflect that the East Africa Safari Rally, due to finish in Nairobi tomorrow night, is indeed different - as Kenya's home-grown safari veterans so proudly insist - from any other on the 14-round world rally championship calendar.

So, too, could Colin McRae, the diffident Scotsman who is reigning world rally champion. Today he, co-driver Derrick Ringer and their Prodrive Subaru were competing in the second leg of the 3,000km marathon - so far, to rivals' relief, without recourse to the spear awarded as part of McRae's initiation as a Masai warrior at a colourful Nairobi ceremony.

Even Ford team manager John Taylor does not sound convinced by his own assertion that the safari is "just a rally like any other".

His own team, too, is not taking his words wholly seriously. The daunting logistics of moving men and machinery around the world are common to all world championship rallies, suggests team co-ordinator Trevor Godden. It is when the cars head into the unforgiving Kenyan bush that similarity with other events ends.

As if to back the Godden view, two Peugeot skid to a halt after their own pre-rally reconnaissance. David Horsey and Angus Leckie are both Kenyans; veterans of not just the Safari but rallies globally. "Bloody hell," mutters Horsey, "we've just done 100km and they were worse than the entire London-Sydney marathon."

Horsey and Leckie have encountered a road which has been washed away. When the rains come, such hazards appear without warning. With large straying game they are the rally's most-feared feature. Unlike the works Ford drivers, Carlos Sainz and the veteran Swedish maestro Stig Blomqvist, Horsey and the rest of the "Kenya cowboys" - the domestic privateers - have no helicopters riding shotgun above to warn of pending disaster.

Sainz and Blomqvist have one each. So do most of the other works teams. And it is the helicopters which most

starkly symbolise the passing of the "old" Safari. Conceived 43 years ago as a non-stop bash through the bush to mark Queen Elizabeth II's coronation, the Safari was, for 30 years, a test as much of stamina as of speed.

Gunnar Palm, who co-drove the Finn Hannu Mikkola's Escort to victory in 1973, recalls that "a fast average speed then was maybe 80 miles per hour and we would drive non-stop for 36 hours. Now they return to Nairobi every night to sleep. But the average speed - the average - will be 100 miles per hour plus. It is indeed a different world."

It is a different world, too, in terms of costs. Few teams talk budget details. Most acknowledge that costs are rising fast towards - indeed may already have reached - the financial stratosphere of Formula One motor racing.

The World Rally Teams Association has been formed, much like FOCA, the constructors' association of Formula One, to negotiate with air freight companies from a position of communal strength. With a single freighter unloading eight rally cars and a pair of helicopters, and airlines disgorging works teams each counted by the dozen, it is clear there is much on which to negotiate.

The costs, says Palm, "are going mad". But there is little, if any, sign of resentment among local drivers. Partly, that is in recognition of the safari's public relations role in a country where the economy, now badly fraying, grows more dependent on tourism. Partly, too, it is recognition that the doughtiest Kenya cowboy can no longer fight helicopters, bottomless pockets and cutting-edge technology.

Yet it is still not quite that simple. The Nairobi bookies may have been quoting Britain's McRae as favourite but the dark horse at the starting ramp was Kenyan Ian Duncan.

Unusually, Duncan was given a works Toyota drive three years ago and promptly came third. In 1994 he won outright.

His mount in this year's Safari is still a Toyota Celica GT4 and it is a works car in all but name: it is entered instead under the name of Toyota Kenya. Duncan thus remained in a position to be a lonely upholder of Kenyan honour. Even so, with Safari conditions, nothing is ever certain. The Safari can still be just a lottery.



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SPORT

The Varsity Boat Race Unsung heroes on the Tideway

Phillip Halliday previews the contest with a look at who will control this year's battle



Putting their weight: Oxford put in some hard work on the Thames near Barnes

The 142nd varsity boat race for the Beefeater Trophy today at 3.30 pm is likely to be decided by two men: the coxes. This year's duel is expected to be close. If so, the person with the rudder strings and the line steered are all-important.

The 4½-mile race on the stretch of the Thames from Putney to Mortlake, known as the Tideway, is like no other. Most races are in a straight

line with little advantage gained from the effects of the tide. But the Oxford and Cambridge boat race has three bends and a quirky stream that fluctuates down the course. The boat that starts on the Middlesex station has the advantage of the first Fulham bend but it is small and the Surrey crew has the inside of the next large Chiswick bend. However, if the stream is strong it may be better not to out the first corner

where the stream is slack. The weather can compound the coxes' problems. For instance, if the water is rough the cox may seek calmer conditions in the lee of the bank. Add to this the need to motivate and drive the crew and the coxes' lot becomes a tough one. The cox is the unsung hero, rarely given credit for victory, often castigated in defeat.

This year's coxes are poles apart but have at least one

thing in common - aggression. The Dark Blue cox, Todd Kristol, from the US, coxed for four years at Harvard University on the river Charles. The Charles is placid compared with the Tideway. "The river in London is daunting at first. I wasn't used to the stream but for the past two weeks I have been living and breathing the Tideway," he says.

The Oxford camp have taken Kristol out on the river in a launch with a Thames boat-

man. He has talked Kristol through the way the river behaves, the ebbs and flows, the varying conditions from day to day. Kristol has four fellow countrymen and a Canadian, Jeremy Howick, in crew and all agree the mo Tideway was a problem first.

The Light Blue cox, "ja Whyman, has more Tideway experience. The first year's coxist from Poultonhouse (88 cut his teeth at King's col-

chester and has raced on the opposite direction to the varsity boat race. "The Tideway is special. It is big, but somewhere out there is the fastest course. And I will find it. It is not well defined and not necessarily in the middle," he says.

Whyman, who dieted hard and ran the London Marathon to get down to 8 stone from his normal 9½ stone, coxes aggressively and will push the crew

and the rules to the limit. So the umpire will have an interesting ride as he tries to keep the crews apart. There has never been a disqualification in the Blue Boat race.

Whyman says he will play on the crew's pride. "Some of the boys are prima donnas. I will play on that. Remind them of the six-months' training. Insult Oxford and their president. "I will be nervous but I must remain calm. The crew doesn't want a cox screaming."

Oxford's Kristol has had to change his style of coxing since leaving the Charles. "I had to relearn my coxing vocabulary and get used to not coaching as much because at Oxford we have so many coaches," he says. "I'm going to do what it takes to win. I will have to be aggressive off the start."

Oxford have one old Blue, Rob Clegg, as well as the large overseas contingent. In contrast, most of the Cambridge crew are British undergraduates with one old Blue, Miles Barnett, and five from last year's impressive reserve crew, Goldie.

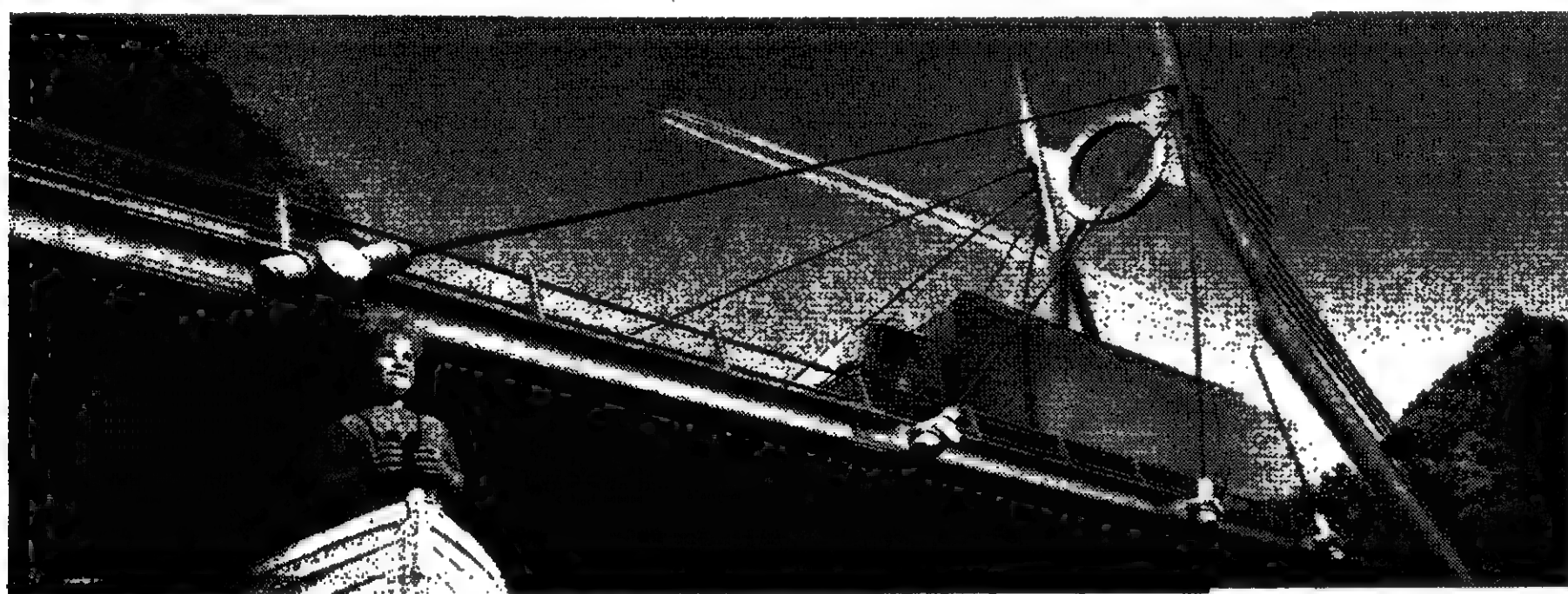
The preparation in the final

week will prove to be crucial. Oxford was coached by Dan Topolski who oversaw 16 wins in 17 years between 1976 and 1992, and who returned last year to try to turn the Light Blue tide of three consecutive wins.

"The foreigners are a great bunch this year, spunky, fun, challenging and full of balls," he says. It has been a long haul over the year to mould the different styles of rowing and the resulting bruised egos into one cohesive unit. Topolski says that was the biggest challenge. "The final polished product is only just being prepared."

In the final week, Cambridge handed over coaching to New Zealand's national coach, Harry Mahon. Mahon, who kept in touch with Cambridge throughout the training, admits this is a less experienced squad. "Cambridge, although not as fast as last year, have got a high power-to-weight ratio and the stroke is deceptively strong."

He agrees the coxes will be crucial. For the first time the two boat clubs have nominated a charity, the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, to benefit from the proceeds raised.



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Drugs in Sport / Pat Butcher Litigation is the name of the game

After a dispute at an Olympic Games earlier this century, when British influence was greater than nowdays, a foreign delegate is reported to have said: "So, Britannia waives the rules again."

That's how it might seem to many after the recent decision by the normally hardline International Amateur Athletics Federation to absolve Diane Modahl, the 800m runner, of any drugs guilt. To others, it will be a signal to get the lawyers among the laboratory equipment.

Modahl's appeal, against procedural irregularities during a test in Lisbon two years ago, had been first dismissed and then upheld by the British federation. In spite of this, Modahl is suing for £480,000 for the time that she has had to wait for vindication, since she was ejected from the Commonwealth Games on the verge of her 800m title defence.

The British federation has already spent close to £100,000 defending the case and, should Modahl succeed in her litigation, the flock of sponsors already flying away from athletics worldwide will migrate even further.

Modahl was fortunate in having several doctors/chemists in the UK willing to do what, in effect, qualified as biochemical research on her behalf. As legislators against drugs in sport have always pointed out in frustration, there is little documentation on the effects and dangers of a huge intake of "sports drugs", since no one in their right mind would dose up on some of the stuff (such as bovine steroids) that competitors are taking clandestinely.

But demands for compensation are as worldwide as drug taking. It was the Dutch Reynolds case which first raised the issue. The 400m world record holder was banned for two years in 1990, but went to the US Supreme Court, arguing similar procedural irregularities to Modahl, plus restriction of trade. He was awarded \$97.3m but, after the IAAF employed a Washington lobbying firm, the regulations concerning professional sports were amended, and the case was overturned.

The German experience since reunification has been a minefield. As in other areas of society, west Germans have

done everything they can to discredit the former East German. The eagerness with which Kathrin Krabbe, the 1991 world sprint champion, has been pursued by the new, west German dominated administration hints at victimisation. Yet the German federation recently agreed that she had the right to sue the IAAF.

German civil courts will not uphold drug bans for longer than two years, while the IAAF ban is four years. The longer sentence was introduced, principally at the behest of the British in 1991. In the first big rebuff of his presidency, Primo Nebiolo's move to reintroduce two-year bans was kicked out in Göteborg at last year's World Championships.

And there is more to come from Germany. Thanks to Verne Franke, a leading biochemist, who is married to a former East German athlete, Brigitte Berendonck, the couple have pursued East German drugs doctors/administrators with an intellectual vengeance. There was a general amnesty announced for all athletes after reunification. But Berendonck published a book based on East German sports files detailing the drugs fed to leading athletes over the past 20 years.

They took Olympic long-jump champion, Heike Drechsler, to court, when she was unwise enough to say at her post-Olympic press conference that Berendonck was lying in respect of her drugs intake. Berendonck won.

The couple claim that their campaign is similar to the post-war pursuit of Nazis, a demand for admission of guilt. They have taken up the case of former weightlifter Roland Schmidt who had to have drug-induced breasts removed surgically three years ago. Schmidt lost a civil case against his former sports "doctors" last week, but it could go to the Supreme Court. Schmidt has duly filed an appeal, which will not be lost on the IAAF and sports administrators everywhere. The IAAF says it is not liable for national federation costs in drug cases. That remains to be seen, when the Modahl case gets under way in earnest. That athletics takes the rap for every other sport which is lukewarm on drugs legislation is undeniable. But athletics, as the main Olympic discipline, cannot run away from it.

ARTS

The Diaghilev of derring-do

Nigel Andrews talks to film director John Woo, who movies make one forget the bloodletting and think of the

John Woo, who attained near-mythical status in Hong Kong as an action director before migrating to Hollywood, sits in his 20th Century Fox office fielding my questions about screen violence.

Just why does it have such popular appeal, I ask? Especially in our own decade of *Reservoir Dogs*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Desperado* and indeed Woo's own first American film, the mayhem-intensive Jean Claude Van Damme actioner *Hard Target*. Is violence a movie equivalent of rock music?

"Yes, yes, I think so," says the white-shirted, immaculate Woo. "I know that in my case young audiences seem to find some message, some extreme excitement in the action. They find something beyond violence. It becomes almost like a poetry of action."

Brought over to Tinseltown on a tide of praise from such as Scorsese and Tarantino, who admired his high-style Asian thrillers (*A Better Tomorrow*, *The Killers*), Woo has just completed his second American film *Broken Arrow*. The Travolta-starring military thriller, opening in Britain next week, earned back its \$60m budget in one brisk month in the US. Now Woo sits in America, where he has obtained "permanent resident" status, trying to ensure that cultural transplanting does not mean cultural defilement.

"My first movie here was a shock," he says. "In Hong Kong everything is simple. You have one or two meetings with a studio or finance company to go through story, cast and budget and that's it. They don't even want to see any

footage till the movie is made. Here I've never known so many meetings. Six months I went on meeting and meeting for *Hard Target*."

Even on *Broken Arrow*, whose rushes so impressed Fox that they raised the budget from an initial \$47m, Woo says he struggled to adjust to a movie culture obsessed with cost and control.

"I would have nine or ten days for an action sequence in Hong Kong. Here they only give me three or four. They think it is easy work! But it is only easy if you want the ordinary and conventional."

Which is not what this Diaghilev of derring-do is about. In a Woo film human bodies scar and fly across the screen, gunshots pepper out surreal tattoos, furniture self-destructs, banisters act as ski slopes, and the screen is so rhythmic, so kaleidoscopic that you forget about bloodletting and think of it as ballet.

If Bruce Lee broke all action movie rules and barriers in Hong Kong, I'd gather the cast and crew in the morning and say, 'Okay, this scene is about two undercover cops ambushed by 30, 30 guys in a restaurant. So I need that many stunt guys and costumes.'

"Then I look about. There's a table - what can I do with it? A banister - ah, maybe the hero will slide down it shooting with two guns at the same time. And I walk round the set and everyone goes so

silent you can hear a wind blow.

"And then I see 'possessed' by the scene. I start act it out for everyone. If the audience will respond the same way when I shoot the whole scene with four or five cameras, some fast, some slow, to cover every angle and style I might want."

"It keeps everyone alive and interested. It keeps the audience. If they're tired like a dog at the end of a day, they still say John, that would be great, but it would be even better, let's do it."

Now, though, Woo has hit the land of power lunches and project development. And he has encountered another impediment: heard of in Hong Kong's action cinema, censorship.

"They take violence very seriously in America," he says. "Iling how he was required to trim *Hard Target* to avoid a restricted certificate. 'I was told to lose 10 per cent of the gunfire.'"

Is he surprised? Surely we expect a violence-ridden guy like the US to get touchy at images that could stimulate violence?

"But the violence in my movie, like a cartoon, you know, or dancing," says Woo. "For some people too, violence on screen is a bit of fantasy or wish-fulfillment. Something they want to do in life but can't. In the real world there is so much crime, so much unfairness."

"People find that the law can protect everyone and the system is so bad and the government can't clamp down on crime. So they're



John Woo: "Young audiences seem to find some message, some extreme excitement in the action, something beyond violence. It becomes almost like a poetry of action"

frustrated. And in a film when the hero kills or beats up the bad guy, it seems he stands for them! I've seen people cheer and jump up in a cinema."

So Woo would hesitate before making a film in which evil triumphed?

"I would do it if it was an interesting script. But I try to emphasise that justice will eventually win."

It is not a moral vision shared by many movies today. Thanks to Tarantino, Stone and company, we are surrounded by lovable psychotics

asserting their higher charm before a floundering law-and-order system. The "charm" of evil, as it happens, is central to *Broken Arrow*. The film was scripted by Graham Yost, who dreamed up Dennis Hopper's charismatic bomber in *Speed*. The new film's anti-hero is a missile-stealing air force pilot, played with grace and authority by a John Travolta fresh from magnetic hoodlum roles in *Pulp Fiction* and *Get Shorty*.

Woo admits that the devil has the best tunes in *Broken Arrow*. Preview audiences rooted for Travolta right up to his do-or-die last scene. "He makes the character very human but also gives him such great presence," says Woo. "He's a charming baddie, an angel with an evil eye."

But justice and democracy finally triumph, as commercial cinema would like us to believe they do in most parts of the world. There is one place, though, whose future not even Hollywood could light with rosy filters. As a Hong Kong emigrant, is Woo worried about his

own homeland, as the countdown to communism threatens the freedom of both its people and its cinema? "I am worried. But I am hopeful too. Hong Kong film, I always feel, is a bit like an orphan. It has never had help from any government, it's had to survive by its own wits."

After 1997, when they know more about the new system and policy, the film people will find a way to fit in, to flourish, to keep making movies. Hong Kong people - he gives a broad, conspiratorial smile - "are very tricky, you know?"

Some enchanted evening

Alastair Macaulay is bewitched by Irene Worth's rendition of 'A Portrait of Edith Wharton'

Riskily, the great actress Irene Worth takes the Almeida Theatre stage and, speaking, begins to bewitch. She is 80 this year, and sometimes, even in mid-sentence, she can show you old age. But her charm, which is profound and complex and which floods the theatre at once, is richly mixed with youthfulness. Her voice has you immediately in thrall, but in due course there are moments when she pauses - again, sometimes in mid-sentence - and you just hang gratefully on her luminous face. London sees more great actors per annum than any other city, but enchantment like this occurs even here very seldom.

During just this one week at the Almeida, she has presented three different programmes: I write after the first, *A Portrait of Edith Wharton*. Standing at a lectern, in a crushed-gold gown of a colour somewhere between saffron, peach and honey, she reads to us for 90 minutes; but she knows the text so well that it is only there to guide her memory. At no moment, do we feel any dichotomy between Worth and Wharton. The range and artistry of the one is channelled into serving the range and artistry of the other, so that one is tempted afterwards to speak of Wharton alone. (The sensual audacity of that passage about Incest! the hilarity of that story about Henry James asking the way!) But it is Worth, not Wharton, who is 80 this year, and she deserves attention.

Her voice - I wish I had a recording - is all music, and there are many musicians who should envy what she seems to do as if without thought. The endings of phrases, for example. Actors are generally taught to avoid bringing sentences down as they end - newscasters are parodied for doing it - but she does it often, and beautifully, because she has so completely a sense of finish. But her phrasing goes beyond each sentence, because the thought does.

There are astonishing sudden decelerations in mid-line without stopping, like smooth transitions from fourth gear to first; seamless joins of one sentence to the next; and a wealth of delicate but lucid dynamic markings, as when she says of Marcel Proust, with the lightest of marcatos and staccato emphasis on the final three descending words, "I could not seek out this rare, pale, moth." The voice, gentle, is full of changing tone and colour, and sometimes adds a haunting nuance for a reason one cannot explain, as when, while explaining quietly that the date was June 1914 she fills the word "June" with a darker colour from the chest.

While you listen, you look. The dark



Irene Worth: her voice has one immediately in thrall

look of the eyes against the light face and pale-fair hair is the most obviously delectable thing about her - the eyes dance - but everything soon becomes compelling: the prominent cheeks, the way the mouth returns to a line of repose or sometimes twitches the cheeks upwards, the sure line of the eyebrows, and more.

And yet how Irene Worth sounds or looks really is beside the point. What affected me most - and what were, surely, closest to Wharton - were the moments when she suddenly became so suffused with Edith Wharton's emotion that she had not to express it but to suppress it. Whether it is the memory of a loveless marriage which drove both her and her

husband into breakdowns, or of a later love-affair ("To me it was a... devastation"), the extraordinary humanity of the moment lies in the way she tries not to indulge it, to express it with as much restraint as true feeling will permit. Of a father's tongue on his daughter's nipples: "Sucking them with a tender gluttony." At other times she makes a sentence thrilling by indicating that mere words cannot suffice. "Marrakesh" (lifting eyes to look above her for a moment and to pause after the ravishing sound of the name itself) "is the great market of the South". Yes, ravishing.

Almeida Theatre, N1. Ends April 6.

The Tate acquired one of the finest collections of contemporary art this week - 320 works by such leading American artists as Warhol, Twombly, Stella and Nauman, plus big German names such as Beuys, Richter and Baselitz. But the Tate will not actually own these works: it will be giving wall space to the collection of the German automotive machine tool manufacturer, Josef Froehlich.

Each year, for four years, a group of paintings will arrive at Millbank, starting next month with Richter and Nauman, plus works by Polke and Carl André. Warhol, with portraits of Jackie Kennedy, Elvis and Liz Taylor, goes on show in May 1998.

There is, of course, a Bankside angle to this. The Tate will open its gallery of modern art there in 2000. It would be surprising if Froehlich did not want to see his paintings on display in such grand surroundings. Nick Serota, the Tate's director, is currently negotiating with many collectors interested in making gifts and loans to fill Bankside. The new museum will boost this new private-public way of displaying art, so important in the modern and contemporary field where museums can rarely compete with private buyers in acquiring the masterpieces.

The Tate will miss its end of year deadline for raising the £50m it needs to match the Millennium Commission's £50m gift for Bankside, but enough is in place to ensure the conversion work on Bankside has started.

The Holy Week's cover was Hamish Macbeth; for Easter, the resurrection celebrated is aptly that of Sir David Attenborough. I notice such things as the Radio Times covers I toy with my morning bowl of Gambacini (a bland musicalised to make you want more by providing minimal enrichment and flavour). The Radio Times soft-pedals the real festival of the country's holy religion, perhaps to plant columnist Polly Toynbee another funny turn. I recently complained that religious programmes

Off the Wall/Antony Thorncroft

Tate goes for loans

The government is in retreat on its insistence that lottery money can only be used for capital projects in the arts. This week heritage secretary Virginia Bottomley repeated her January statement that lottery money can go towards training young artists; and Lord Gowrie, chairman of the Arts Council of England, reported that he was looking at ways to widen access to the arts for the young and the poor by using lottery funds to finance touring and reducing ticket prices. Soon there will be an announcement on lottery money for commissioning new plays, music, artworks, etc.

The government, for electoral reasons, is keen for the Arts Council to move rapidly, but there are some massive hurdles to overcome, not least over the money for new commissions. The current idea is that the copyright to any play, overture, book, or work of art created this way should rest with the lottery fund. The implications for copyright law are tremendous.

Next year the government will give away on the big one. The stabilisation fund will be revealed as an endowment fund in another name. Arts companies with deficits will

have them wiped out and replaced by a nest egg if they pledge to operate within budget in future.

The downside to this good news is that it will enable the Treasury to reduce the annual grant to the Arts Council for revenue funding, and when all the UK's major arts projects are in their new lottery built homes, with their endowments in place, it will be impossible to justify the arts receiving £300m a year from the lottery.

There has been one big loser from the lottery - the Foundation for Sport and the Arts. The foundation may have been born for an ignoble reason - an attempt by the pools companies to delay the introduction of the lottery by setting up their own source of arts and sports funding - but it proved a tremendous success. In five years more than 10,000 arts organisations have shared well over £100m in grants.

But the lottery has dented the revenue of the pools companies, and consequently the sum they hand over to the foundation. From a peak of £68m a year, of which the arts received a third, Graham Endicott, which runs the foundation, anticipates this year an income of nearer £45m and is

reducing its maximum awards from £150,000 to around £75,000. There is, however, some hope. A White Paper is promised which might lead to a reduction in betting tax and hence more money for the foundation.

The foundation is also remarkably flexible. Unlike the lottery, it has responded to the desperate need of arts companies for revenue funding. The Spitfields Festival has become its first such beneficiary, receiving £90,000 over three years. This money is intended to make good the loss of its grant from the crippled Barings Foundation.

However, while the Foundation for Sport and the Arts has less money to distribute, the demands on it, which were running at 500 requests a week, are now under 200. So keep on applying.

Beck's, the German beer company, is sticking with Artangel, the creators of site-specific art works, most famously Rachel Whiteread's "House" project in East London. Beck's announced a £125,000 grant over four years this week, which will be matched by the group's private patrons. "The Company of Angels".

Each angel will now be expected to give £300 a year but in return receives a work from an artist commissioned by Artangel. Its latest success was Robert Wilson's "H.G." exhibition at the Clink Street vaults, and for its next happening it has commissioned the Mexican artist Gabriel Orozco, who plans "transient encounters with forgotten places" around London this summer.

Radio/Martin Hoyle

Soft-peddalling on Holy Week

were made by the religious. She should listen to Radio 3 of a morning for reassurance: sometimes the music programmes are presented by the unimpassioned. It even managed to put out an opera based on the Old Testament without apparently rumbling it: billed as "suicide, murder, striptease, decapitation... Just some of the ingredients of an action-packed opera". *Salome*, of course, from the New York Met on Saturday, and rather interestingly conducted by Donald Runnicles, a Scot better known abroad than in Britain.

Holy Week, as the media seem nervous of calling it, has been marked by the start of a fascinating new series, *Science and Wonder* (Radio 4, Wednesday). It opened with bright nine-year-olds sounding rather more intelligent than a group of faintly adonoidal students: two groups asked their opinion of the existence of God. The first programme dealt with cosmology, the creation, bangs big and little. A nice lady astronomer referred to the universe as "mind-bogglingly large" and

faintly reminded me of Pam Ayers. The believers were on the whole a more sympathetic lot than the sceptics. But then they know that faith by definition does not need proof, while sceptics need to disprove it but cannot. A physical chemist from Lincoln College, Oxford, considered himself, uncharacteristically for his breed, insignificant, but, more in character, thought the rest of the world should realise how insignificant it is too. An American voice said completely, not size, was important; and sounded like Paul Gambacini. Or perhaps things are just getting to me.

Quantum physics were touched on in the same breath as Tommy Cooper ("Just like that!"). It was a stimulating opening, pros and cons vigorously contending over the "extraordinary set of coincidences" that conspired to make life. Unless, as Lincoln College deftly speculated, this universe is one of many, tumbling into existence by a chance mixture of freak conditions. It sounds like programme

planning. Or perhaps not. *Stranger than Fiction*, a series where writers comment on the gospels fielded Melvyn Bragg so opportunely, just as his new novel about Celtic religion in the seventh century hits his fans, as to make one think there was some great intelligence behind it all. On television BBC produced *Road to Golgotha* presented in Cornwall by the actor who plays Gus, the arse-donkey boss in *Drop the Dead Donkey*. When he announced the scriptures to be about real people with real, real feelings, almost moist-eyed in his liveliness, I wondered whether the whole thing might be a send-up. But no, he messes people who have suffered, been in trouble, and draws comparisons that I think faintly insulting both to them and the scriptures.

Still, it is marginally livelier than some of the contributors to *Stranger than Fiction*. Jimmy McGovern explained the name "Flit" (as in his TV series *Cracker*) came from a Liverpool priest. He told a compelling story about his wife being sacked from the support centre where she worked and used phrases like "crucifying my wife", all of which would have had an ominously trivialising effect had not his dingy-like Scouse tones induced in me a mind-boggling somnolence. This was broadcasting by a non-broadcaster. Polly Toynbee should be happy.

New York, Summer 1954.

One man is dead. The life of another is at stake.

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ROBERT EAST
TONY HAYGARTH
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ARTS



Although his best was intermittent, it could be very good: Gustave Caillebotte's 'The Pont de l'Europe', 1876

More than an amateur dilettante

William Packer argues the case for Gustave Caillebotte, the 'unknown' Impressionist

The centenary of Gustave Caillebotte's death in 1894 was celebrated by a full retrospective at the Grand Palais in Paris, which travelled on to Chicago and then to Los Angeles last summer. A much smaller version of that show, but with some additional loans, now comes to London and the Sackler Galleries of the Royal Academy. Why the fuss?

The simple answer is that Caillebotte is known as an interesting figure of his time, but not generally as a painter, for which he is remembered only by a few familiar images - top-hatted men on balconies high above the *grands boulevards*, a modern iron railway bridge, workmen laying parquetry, a man and woman walking beneath an umbrella in the rain. While the huge 'Paris Street in the Rain' from the Chicago Art Institute, with its

dramatic perspective and stark silhouettes, does not travel to England, Geneva's iron 'Pont de l'Europe' does, along with one of the 'Parquet Layers', and enough else to give the range and flavour of the work. The truth is that at his best Caillebotte can be very good, but that best is intermittent, and his worst can be dreadful. At times he takes a very odd view of human anatomy, especially of nudes - as on the man drying himself after his bath - and, as on the pain in a smock who walks towards us up the hill. His figures and portraits can be very stiff, his colour garish, his touch crude.

But then, time and again, he surprises us with passages, indeed whole paintings, of real tenderness and subtlety, the touch light, the vision fresh and true. Behind that odd figure trudging up the hill we catch the real sense of the glaring summer landscape, with

the cool sea far below in the distance. Again he looks down from the cliff-top, high above the eccentric roofs and pinnacles of the villas by the sea. His beloved boats swing quietly on their buoys on the Seine at Argenteuil. In the small late self-portrait, the painter half turns towards the mirror, which is us, gently introspective.

In all these things, the image is achieved so deftly and truly that we begin to think of Renoir in the soft, tactile modelling of a figure, of Degas in the *coquetry* of his interiors and his radical tricks of composition, of Pissarro in the fields and gardens, of Sisley, Monet, Manet along the river. With the flower paintings he is all but in a class of his own, for even Fantin-Latour did not paint flowers with such an expansive confidence and freedom, nor yet did any other Impressionist paint them with

such easy, attentive accuracy, those chrysanthemums so crisp and lush. Younger than his fellow Impressionists and a late starter into the bargain, Caillebotte died well before most of them at only 45, after a career of barely 20 years. His misfortune, if we can call it that, was to be both well-off and sociable, keen on such distractions as sailing and rowing. His means allowed him to patronise his fellows, himself perhaps an inhibition, trying early and judiciously.

The legacy which he left to the state after his death brought Impressionist and post-Impressionist works into French public collections for the very first time. Not everything was accepted, but Cézanne, Manet, Degas, Sisley, Pissarro, Monet and Renoir featured strongly among the 40 that were, Manet's 'Balcony', Monet's 'Gare St Lazare', and

the great 'Bal du Moulin de la Galette' of Renoir among them. But there was nothing of Caillebotte himself, though the family did give a couple of good things later on - a 'Raboteurs du parquet', and some houses in the snow. While Caillebotte's unevenness as a painter has to be admitted, his subsequent obscurity other than as a remarkable and generous collector was no more deserved than would be an inflated reputation now. Here we see him in all his qualities and faults, for the most part more worthy than inspired, but capable of flights of brilliance that make us wonder at what might have been, had he lived longer, or had to work harder for a living, or simply been more consistent in his application.

He was an original too, in a modest way, bringing to Impressionism an academic thoroughness of method and a

quality of ironical social realism - a smart bourgeois couple on the heavy iron bridge, workmen laying expensive parquetry, house-painters in the street. His high perspectives too were new, and his interest in near and far, in the traffic island far below laid out like a map, the figure on the balcony against the distance, the tiny figures seen through the railings. But does it matter whether or not he was first to look down on the boulevards, or remark the dignity of labour, or take a boat on the river? Not really. It is the paintings as paintings that matter, and they tell us clearly that Caillebotte was something more than an amateur and dilettante. We should give him his due.

Gustave Caillebotte - The Unknown Impressionist: The Royal Academy, Piccadilly W1, until June 23. Sponsored by Société Générale.

Television/Martin Hoyle

Quaint Celtic folk at large

Wood. The character of the cop himself is still in focus. In the first instalment of the first series he kicked in the headlights of an English visitor's car, presumably an unduly eccentric trait in Scottish policemen. The odd bout of pot-smoking evidently characterises him as cool, a bid for the juvenile market, though I suspect nice motherly types, who have yet to see the actor Robert Carlyle as a psychopathic drugie in *Trainspotting*, make up most of HM's fans.

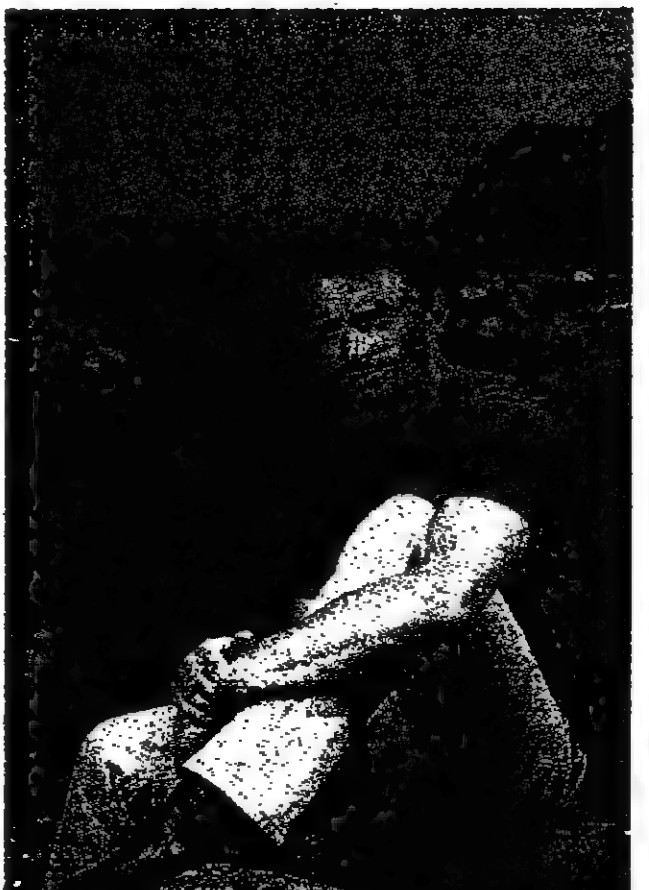
There seems to be a tight-knit group of Scottish actors who get most of the jobs. Thus it is slightly startling to see the archetypal urban oddity Andrea from *Rob C. Nesbitt* among the villagers, doubly so to spot the bereaved gay from *Tugboat* as the (in this context) alarmingly maternal male housekeeper of the police station. All this and a new series of *Doctor Finlay* too.

Another woman writer, whom the media have dealt more kindly with, is A.S. Byatt. Sunday's *Bookmark* was almost reverential as it talked the former Booker prizewinner into the school boiler-room where she wrote her first

romantic fiction, the terraced house of her childhood, and the site of her seaside holidays. A nice woman, a serious writer, far much of the time, she was almost defiantly unphotogenic, cooed in a dumpy coat and hat straight out of silent cinema. She was moving, when she spoke of coming to terms with grief at the death of her son. At such moments the programme flickered wily with a suddenly glimpsed sense of purpose. Otherwise, to tell the truth, it was a little dull.

It was a week when women linger in the memory. BBC's *Hollywood Angel* looked at Sister Helen Prejean, the American nun who inspired the Oscar-winning film *Dead Man Walking*. She is obviously one of the world's - one hesitates to say 'top-godders', the phrase is so eroded by irony, but good and compassionate she is, with a cheerfully brisk, no-nonsense articulateness, and that underlying sense that there is no time to waste that marks out the passionately committed. Her sympathy is not merely for the convicted of death row but also for the relations of murder victims. Saddest of all was the scene when two groups of demonstrators faced one another outside the jail where a killer was due to be executed. The man's family and friends screamed and wailed not only at the authorities but at a forlorn middle-aged couple implacably facing them across the road. The unforgiving, unforgetting parents of a girl raped and murdered.

The programme showed Sister Helen advising behind the scenes on *Dead Man Walking* with director Tim Robbins and actress Susan Sarandon; all very worthy, as the movie doubtless is. The BBC now seems to regard itself as a publicity machine for Hollywood. On Saturday BBC2 even proudly mounted a double-bill (an Australian comedy with



Robert Carlyle as Hamish Macbeth: his little community is a cross between 'Whisky Galore' and a Gaelic 'Milk Wood'

Anthony Hopkins, a drama directed by Oliver Stone) 'to coincide with the current release of *Nixon*'. Why? Is the corporation's business to dun up support for the local high street cinema? Did these movies need special pleading? Or is it the old peg syndrome - find a reason (anniversary, theme, topical reference) to hang programming on? I hope there are no more commercial reasons.

Another young woman's face remains vivid from the week's viewing. Fleur Lombard was the firefighter killed on duty in a supermarket blaze. A man faces charges of arson and manslaughter. As Monday's *World in Action* reminded us, one-storey factories, stores and warehouses are firetraps. The programme's two-pronged attack revealed how financial constraints are crippling many fire brigades with cutbacks both in training and education and in personnel - eight of the first brigades at the Canary Wharf bombing are among those scheduled for the chop -

but also how the government (aided by vested interests) refuses to act on recommended safety precautions, all in the cause of deregulation and cutting red tape. 'Red tape' in this case means such necessary measures as sprinklers, shown in America to contain conflagrations and cut fatalities. Perhaps the mention of America, whose examples in all things we have slavishly followed since 1979, may get through to this government. Its present sublime attitude is that such measures are unnecessary since the premises should be evacuated anyway. At last the reasoning behind their policy towards the National Health Service is clear: hospitals are unnecessary because we should not have got ill in the first place. Needless to say, officialdom declined to utter, whether from arrogance, idleness or inarticulateness it was left to us to judge. Meanwhile, the image of Fleur Lombard's beautiful young face lingers.

Speaking of arrogance and inarticulateness, *This Life* founders on from disastrous episode to catastrophic instalment. This - forgive me for reminding you if you had managed to obliterate it from your memory - is BBC's 'comic drama' which is neither comic nor dramatic. There was a fear (we should be so frightened) that it might resemble Channel 4's *Friends*. But the characters in that American twentysomething comedy might be bright company if you met them socially. They come up with one-liners, they are occasionally witty, they express themselves without a four-letter word every other line. The BBC's brood of young lawyers is witless, charmless, graceless, gormless and clueless. Sullen, callow, foul-mouthed and self-absorbed they bear, thank God, no relation to any living human being I have come across. Clumsily written, or possibly improvised from graffiti, portentously photographed and clod-hoppingly directed, it boasts one half-way convincing character: Scottish Anna (Daniela Nardini), who looks browned off with the whole squalid enterprise. Try *Hamish Macbeth*, then.

مكتبة من الامم

CHESS

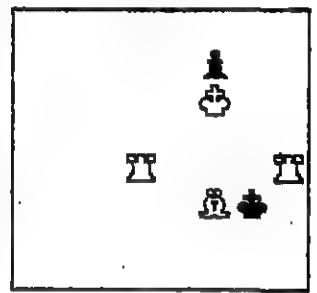
Opposition is mounting to the mother of all chess matches, the \$2m Karpov v Kamsky International Chess Federation (Fide) world title series starting in Baghdad on June 1, where Saddam Hussein has promised to make the first move. The BCF has joined calls for an urgent meeting of European federations, and it has emerged that some members of the board are less than pleased at the near-unilateral decision of Fide's president Kirsan Ilyuzhnikov to accept the offer from his personal friend Hussein.

Meanwhile, the world No 1 Garry Kasparov, who broke away from Fide, recovered from his poor start at VSB Amsterdam to share first prize: 1-2 Kasparov and Topalov 6½/9, 3-4 Anand and Short 5, 5-6 Kramnik and Lautner 4½, and four others. The result is good for Nigel Short, who missed a chance to beat Kasparov by a rook sacrifice, and splendid for the play of the 21-year-old Bulgarian Topalov (Topalov-Timman, Caro-Kann Defence).

1 e4 e5 2 d4 d5 3 c3 Opening fashions changes 3 Nc3, which used to be book here, has given way to 3 e5 popularised by Short and to 3 cxd5 (Kasparov). Bf5 4 Nf3 e6 5 Bc3 Nd7 6 d4 h6 7 b5 Ne7 8 c4 Ng6 9 Na3 Nf4.

Nb4 may be a better way to simplify. 10 Bxd4 Bxd3 11 Bxd3 Bg4 12 Bb1 Be7 13 b3 Bb5 14 Qe2 0-0 15 Qe3! Black has made no obvious errors, yet White is poised for a sacrificial attack. a5 16 cxd5 cxd5 17 Bxb5 Bxh5 18 gxf3 Bx4 19 gxf6 19 Qxh5 f5 20 Kh1! Bg5 21 Rg1 wins quickly. 19 Kh1 f5 20 Rg1 Rf7 21 Rxf7 Rxf7 22 Qh6 Bg6 23 Qxe6+ Kh8 24 Qxd5 Qe7 25 Qg4 Nxe5 26 dxe5 Qxe5 27 Rbe1 Qf5 28 Qh5+ Egs 29 Rxe5 Rxe5 30 Qh7+ Kf8 31 Qh6+ Kf7 32 Bg6+ Resigns.

No 1123



White mates in four moves, against any defence (by K. Junker). Earlier solvers have found this difficult.

Solution Page 11

Leonard Barden

BRIDGE

This year's annual encounter between the House of Lords and House of Commons was hosted, as always, by the English Bridge Union in London.

Recently, the balance of power has shifted to the Commons. This year, however, the Lords reasserted themselves. This early board threatened disaster for the Lords.

At three of the four tables in play, the Commons scored well, including 830 for 4E. Where the Lords sat North-South, East (Michael Mates)

opened three hearts and South passed. West (Sir Peter Emery) missed a chance to increase the pre-empt when he also passed (though this action can scarcely be criticised) and Lord Stamp (North) boldly protected with three spades.

South might have reasoned that his partner had already taken full account of all his values but he nonetheless raised to four spades. Mates could have beaten this by leading the club queen but he preferred to try ace and another diamond. Had Baker held the king of diamonds rather than the king of clubs, this would have been a winning action.

Lord Stamp demonstrated both table presence and technique when he won the second diamond, led a small trump to the jack, king and two, and fished the 10 of trumps on the way back.

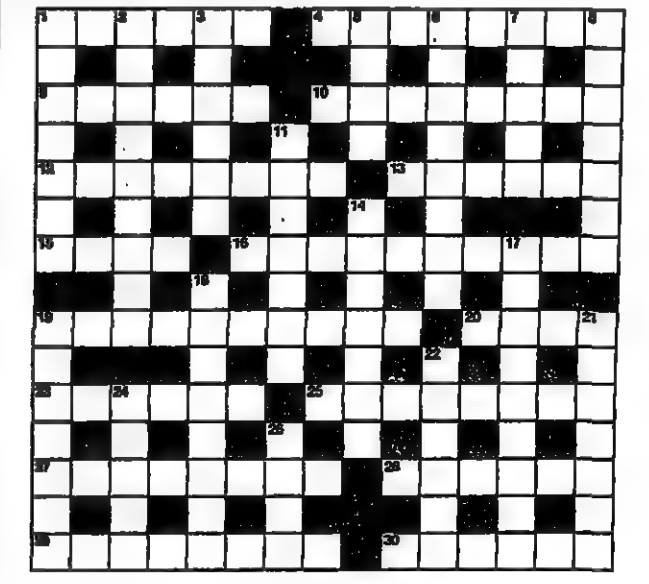
Declarer could now establish a heart winner for a club discard, to make his game.

John Williams

CROSSWORD

No. 9,037 Set by CINEPHILE

A prize of a classic Pelikan Sovereign 500 fountain pen for the first correct solution opened and five runner-up prizes of 25 Pelikan vouchers. Solutions by Wednesday April 17, marked Crossword 9,037 on the envelope, to the Financial Times, Number One Southwark Bridge, London SE1 8UL. Solution on Saturday April 30.



Name: _____ Address: _____

F in the clues has the same meaning, or the opposite without E

- ACROSS
- County administrations (8)
 - Girl, western, in transport exposes social disharmony (5,3)
 - Polson affecting single beast in row (6)
 - A net used by the space lobby? (8)
 - Climates adapted for climber (8)
 - Over-ornate article missing from state (6)
 - Spot dangerous to sailors? (4)
 - In turning nose to snub, revolutionary bears arms (10)
 - Old F took the chair with maker of tea and other things (10)
 - Probability of half the numbers (4)
 - F for first rule on identification the other way (8)
 - Food for East African and where to put it (8)
 - Give F a miss (8)
 - Punishment for erring priest (6)
 - Peer worried about writers not being spontaneous (8)
- DOWN
- Uninteresting nonsense not welcome in the house (3,3)
 - Cocktail in combination (7)
 - Single number in a temporary home: F on its day (9)
 - F for serving men (6)
 - F is another's property (4)
 - Slouch with his head on her hair (8)
 - Sergeant major maybe takes over as suffer (5)
 - Painter frantic over an F (7)
 - Relative growing new skin on island (7)
 - Plain liver cooking a turnip (7)
 - F to get influenza and die when raised: it's right (3,2,4)
 - Writer sounds a trumpet (8)
 - Trouble's up for father with fizzy drink (4,3)
 - Cups set in wrong order: think he did it? (7)
 - F losing its head in front of the Queen (6)
 - Rubbish used to be ten short (5)
 - God of the rising waterway (3)

WINNERS 9,037: D.W. Tilley, York; Cynthia Jones, Montreal, Canada; C. Pilling, Madrid, Spain; Ignatius Faherty, Loughborough, London; John Bell, Halesham, Sussex; Geoffrey Byard, Shirley, Solihull.

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An Easter Message
Throughout the bleak winter, the last for many in our care, the warmth of your compassion was beyond mortal praise. May your kindness be blessed with peace and good health during Easter and all seasons.
Sister Superior.

BOOKS

Sympathy in a world of hostility

William Dawkins on a missionary who devoted her career to helping Japan's despised lepers

Nothing more clearly symbolises Japan's tradition of concealing the unsightly than its attitude to lepers.

More than 40 years after most industrialised countries ended mandatory quarantine for lepers following the discovery of a treatment for the disease, Japan's 5,800 lepers are still shut up in remote colonies, some with excruciatingly euphemistic names like Garden of Fulfillment.

That situation is about to change. The Japanese government has just approved a bill to scrap the leprosy prevention law - under which lepers are obliged to live in colonies - and the new health minister, Naoto

Kan, has issued a fulsome apology to the sufferers. Within the next couple of months, the bill is likely to pass through parliament.

All this brings to a conclusion a campaign started in the late-19th century by a largely forgotten English missionary, Hannah Riddell. Her extraordinary life is recounted in a recently published biography by Julia Boyd, wife of Sir John Boyd, a recent British ambassador to Japan.

A forceful lady, who spent much

of her life trying to rise above her origins in a barracks in Barnet, Hertfordshire, Hannah Riddell set out for Japan in 1880 to make a career, more than - or so her colleagues suspected - to save souls.

She soon spotted an opportunity in the treatment of lepers, one area where Japan was falling behind in its high speed Meiji era transformation from feudal to modern industrialised society. In the southern rural town of Kumamoto, where Riddell was based, she was saddened to see

HANNAH RIDDELL: AN ENGLISHWOMAN IN JAPAN
by Julia Boyd
Charles E. Tuttle 11.89p.
215 pages

that lepers were confined to the grounds of a Buddhist temple. After spectacular battles with the local missionary hierarchy, the strong-willed Riddell stamped

through the social barriers to forge friendships at the highest levels. With these contacts' help, she established one of the first modern leper colonies in Japan, in which inmates were treated with humanity and respect. Riddell was in her element running her Kaishun Hospital for lepers in Kumamoto, perhaps winning prestige and recognition that would have been denied in Britain.

By Lady Boyd's account, she governed with the affectionate firmness of a British public school matron.

Known as "Mother" by her fearful and yet adoring patients, Riddell was often seen being carried around Kumamoto in a litter, followed by her pack of small pedigree dogs.

Sadly, Kaishun was destroyed by the military authorities - who thought it was a training centre for spies - just after the outbreak of the second world war. But she is still remembered warmly by the locals.

They recently formed a memorial society to Riddell and her niece,

Ada Wright, who carried on the good work after Riddell's death in 1902. It was recognition of just how important the two Englishwomen were in destroying some prejudices. Without them, the entire of mandatory quarantine might have come about even more slowly than was the case.

However, this acceptance comes too late for the few surviving inmates of Kaishun and other Japanese leprosy sufferers. Few old peoples' homes will accept them in the mistaken belief that leprosy is highly contagious. So they will stay where they are, drawing a very little comfort, perhaps, from the health minister's apologies and memories of old friends like the ladies of Kaishun Hospital.

God versus Evil through the ages

Hugh Dickinson on two books that seek to make sense of mankind's attitude to God and the devil

Suddenly Evil is stalking the land. It is Evil, apparently, which spots a twisted personality and then manipulates him or her to perpetrate horrific acts. If the tabloids are anything to go by, Evil is now regaining a personality of his own and sports a capital E on his name - an age-old attempt to keep up with God. He is emerging from the dungeon dimensions of the psychic world as a newly active agent. Satan is even getting a biography.

Of course in the strange paranoid subcultures of the sects, we expect to find an

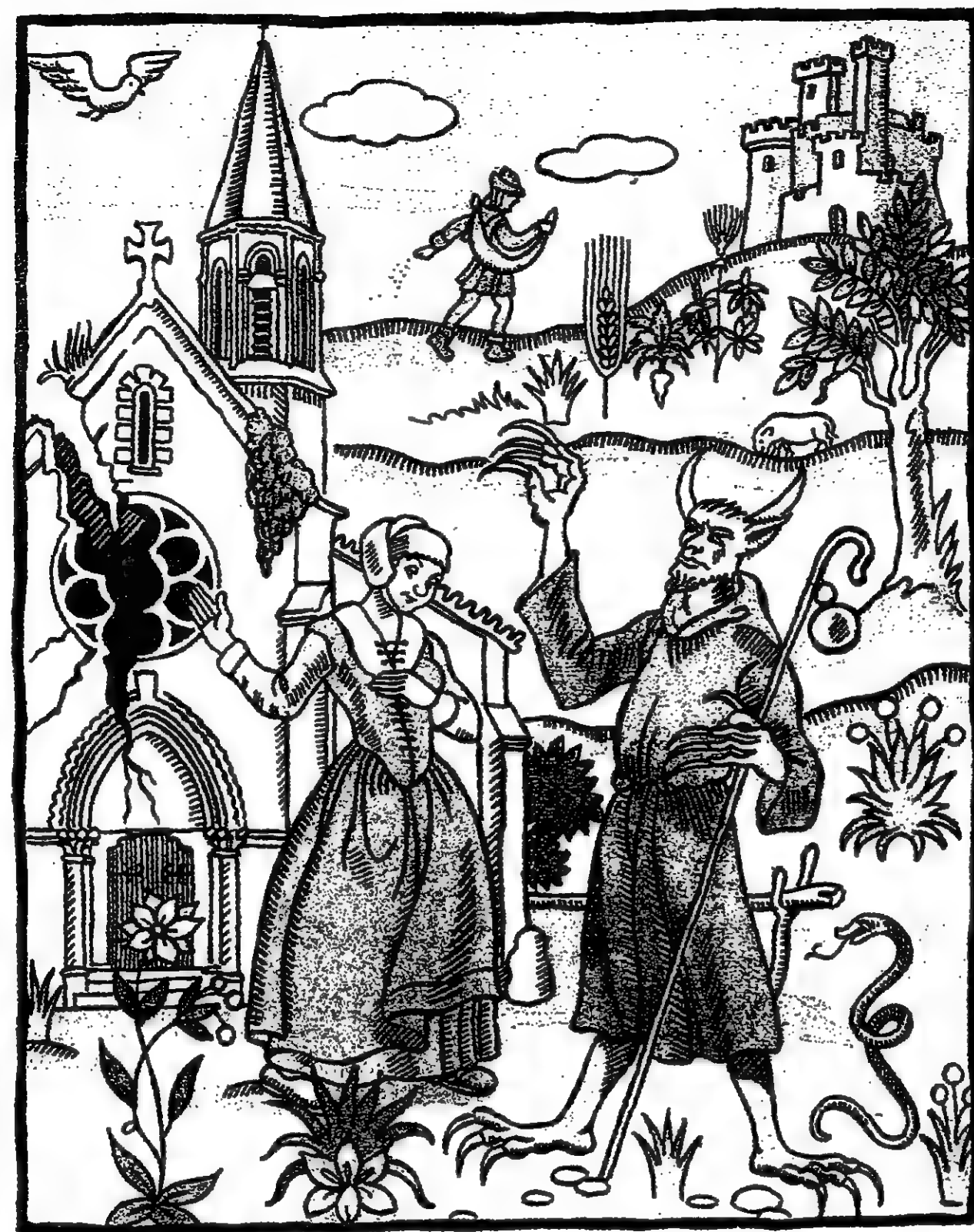
native inner world of Western culture for more than 2,000 years. Most of the primal myths of our race, such as those from Mesopotamia, deal with the archetypal human experience of living in a world shot through with darkness and light. How does it come about that the world is as absurd? How do we or any human beings make sense of the grotesque agonies and glorious ecstasies of our condition, woven so inextricably together?

Devil: A Biography is an extended metaphor for a history of this age-old struggle to account for the darkness in a world in which we sense that light is truly the condition for which we are made.

The earliest religious myths were mostly monist, attributing both good and evil to the random or inscrutable purposes of totally capricious gods. The classical pantheon is the most familiar example. The inherent amorality of the divine realm then becomes philosophically intolerable and some form of modified dualism consolidates into the rigid schematised structures of the medieval heaven and hell.

Stanford traces the fascinating interweaving of these myths and theologies from pre-Christian times, and describes in graphic detail their generally malign influence on culture, society and politics, through the Crusades, the Gunter Hersey bunts and the witch hunts of the 17th century. He takes a happy detour through Milton and the Romantics and lands us into the revivalist sects of the 18th and 20th centuries. All very interesting and well told.

But is there an enemy out there, envious, malign and cruel, who simply hates all goodness, beauty and truth? Tolkien's great myth *The Lord of the Rings* has been memorably personified as The Dark Lord.



Is there a malign enemy who hates goodness, beauty and truth? A traditional French illustration shows Satan destroying agriculture and the church.

who like Iago hates without a cause. Does Screwtop exist? Or are all these potent images simply corporate projections, metaphors, imaginative devices, which help us handle the archetypes of darkness within ourselves?

In two all too brief chapters right at the end, Peter Stanford turns to the psychiatrists rather than the priests. Among them there are a few voices who seem to be saying that from time to time they do meet a human being who is not just mad but truly evil without cause. The judgment is of course subjective, but it is one to which many priests would cautiously assent. The spine can still be chilled after all,

and the "mystery of iniquity" remains unresolved.

The search for Satan is one thing. The search for God is something altogether other, not only because there are two different authors - though not so different as they might be in this case - but because the nature of the quest for God is deeply existential. This Grail contains the mystery of being itself.

Like Peter Stanford, Paul Johnson has been imbued with the imagery of Catholic Christianity from his childhood. *The Quest For God* is subtitled *A Personal Pilgrimage* and is explicitly written to try and make coherent sense of a personal faith within the tradition

of the church, not only as a personal exploration but also as a potential guide for others. As we would expect it is lucid, elegant and highly intelligent. It is also intensely personal. The reader has a sense of being written to directly: "Now, you may be thinking...". "Now, you may say...". Johnson covers the field of Christian belief quite systematically - Why believe in God? What alternatives have we? He or She? Evil, heaven and hell, other faiths, eternity and time. He concludes with the quest for God takes place only within a glided cage. It is significant that the name of Thomas Merton does not appear in the index.

Moreover, "I want everyone I love to be part of the church, because I am acutely conscious of the security and comfort, the stability and certitude, the happiness and the wisdom - yes, and the freedom - which being a Catholic has brought me. I want to share these gifts."

So the central problem of unquestionable authority and certitude remains unquestioned. Johnson engagingly admits his own psychological need for such a framework for faith. But it does seem as if the quest for God takes place only within a glided cage. It is significant that the name of Thomas Merton does not appear in the index.

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Rereadings/Brian Sewell

Anatomy of a cat's cradle

Aims for Oblivion, the portmanteau title of novels by Simon Raven that between them must be the longest of all romances, was published between 1964 and 1976, by which year the list of dramatic personae thoughtfully provided with each volume ran to 11 pages, and the price had risen from a guinea to £3.95.

A brief statement in the first, *The Rich Pay Late*, informed us that each in the series was to be independent, though loosely connected by 10 major characters.

The constant theme was the vulnerability since the last war of all that is fine and noble in the English upper classes "to the malice of time, chance and the rest of the human race".

Those who had read Raven's first novel, *The Feathers of Death* of 1963, knew what to expect, and expectations were high, lubricious and prurient.

Charterhouse, King's College Cambridge, and five years as a regular officer in the Shropshire Light Infantry, gave Raven insights into the Machiavellian cat's cradle by which the upper crust establishment achieves power and maintains influence, from early youth to dotage.

He observed its rituals and codes, its capacity for casuistry, its sexual diversions into downright lechery and its covert ventures into the twilight of the pretty boy and sugar daddy and the mafia of that particular underworld.

For his characters he took those about him, some now recognisable as past members of Conservative cabinets, life peers and broadsheet editors. For settings, episodes and narratives he used his own experiences, many shared and recognised by readers of his age to the point of hallucinatory familiarity.

Towards its end the series shows signs of effort and contrivance; the narratives are a trifle strained, a touch too fantastical; characters that had been plain unpleasant, like smarmy boys at school, are suddenly malevolent.

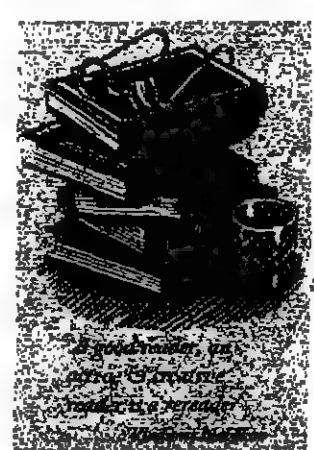
But the seventh novel, *Sound the Retreat*, retains all the early vigour and controlled complexity, its events peopled with old familiars whose cousins, not even twice removed, we know.

In its serious moments it illuminates the government's careless abandonment of India too soon after the war, with riot, religious bigotry and mayhem the handmaidens of that freedom. In turn light-hearted vein it recalls the tribulations and pleasures of

the national service officer cadet and subaltern.

Raven's sense of the sinister steadily darkens the tale and brings it to its end with the death of Gilzal Khan, a wise and honourable Moslem captain in the Indian army. It is a predetermined execution, but not as planned - he is murdered by an English subaltern whom we suppose to have been, if not his lover, certainly the object of a more than amicable affection.

Raven's mischievous sexual humour irradiates the book. He catches the cadets at what John Aubrey, the 17th-century commentator, once described as masturbation, introduces stout Peter Morrison to joyful heterosexual sex with an adolescent chi-chi prostitute, and sets Gilzal Khan and Cadet Mortleman to settling their



differences by proving their manhood with assorted prostitutes and stratagems, much to the entertainment of all the other boys in the platoon.

Such a tale will never be a set text in English literature exams, though Raven's command of English is felicitous. In any case it is difficult to see how the sixth form of a comprehensive school of mixed ethnicity could comprehend the deep-deep Englishness of a chronicle so based on public school practice and tradition, and glossed with snobbery and self-deprecating wit.

For men of a certain age, however, who are occasionally nostalgic, it is the perfect book for taking travelling in foreign parts, a reminder less of home than of a past long gone that made a man of man.

Taken as a whole, *Aims for Oblivion* must be the last great picaresque novel, its sub-texts vice and virtue, treachery and sacrifice, decency and dumb stupidity. It is peculiarly English - defying translation in its Englishness - and of all its parts, *Sound the Retreat* is perhaps the prize exemplar.

By far the most enjoyable of the recent wave of showbiz detectives, Simon Shaw's unwholesome hero Philip Fletcher is endowed with a mordant wit and a casual proclivity for murder. A jokey version of Patricia Highsmith's Tom Ripley, he is creepy, self-centred and overweeningly ambitious. Shaw, himself a successful actor, is a dab hand at backstage bitchiness. But in *The Company of Anzwy* (HarperCollins, £14.99), Fletcher is obliged to forgo the professional boards for a somewhat less distinguished venue.

Hired by a cabinet minister to recover the diaries of his deceased homosexual father, Fletcher has to penetrate a louche nightclub specialising in drag acts. With the possibility of a knighthood spurring him on, our disagreeable hero decides to utilise his acting skills - and Marlene von Trapp, "glittering star of the Heidelberg Cabaret" is born. The seamy setting provides ample opportunity for wispish asides, though the Peckinpah-like violence of the climax, when Fletcher's homicidal tendencies are finally released, involves a grinding gear-change from earlier campiness.

We move from the psychopathic to the psychic with

Murder in Scorpio by Martha C Lawrence (Hodder, £16.99). Her protagonist, Californian private investigator Dr Elizabeth Chase has a propensity for extrasensory intuition and seeing auras. She also has a fondness for Zen macrobiotics and feels the "beginnings of post-traumatic stress syndrome" after a minor run-in with the bad guys. It scarcely speaks in drag acts. With the possibility of a knighthood spurring him on, our disagreeable hero decides to utilise his acting skills - and Marlene von Trapp, "glittering star of the Heidelberg Cabaret" is born. The seamy setting provides ample opportunity for wispish asides, though the Peckinpah-like violence of the climax, when Fletcher's homicidal tendencies are finally released, involves a grinding gear-change from earlier campiness.

In the twinkling of a third eye, Dr Chase is analysing a computer generated cosmic map of the demise. "Right in the middle of the cluster we find Neptune, the mystery planet," she announces. "Placed here in the eighth house it indicates death under mysterious circumstances."

As an example of West Coast psycho-babble this book is hard to beat, but it might prove unwise to attempt a deeper critique. Judging by the dust-jacket, Lawrence shares both the beliefs and much-discussed good looks of her creation. Who knows how far her powers extend?

Overweight and resembling a "bald dinosaur", Commissario Piero Trotti could scarcely be more down to earth. Splendidly realised in four previous novels, Timothy Williams' morose Italian detective is resignedly contemplating retirement at the start of *Big Italy* (Gollancz, £8.99). He brusquely rejects a private eye's invitation to look into the murder of a wealthy doctor and gets on with his final posting, as head of a child abuse unit. But when the gumshoe turns up with a bullet through

the brain, Trotti's involvement becomes inevitable. There is enough material here to fill two crime novels, although Trotti's parallel investigation of a deeply unpleasant case of child abuse offers little of diversion from the central theme. After a marathon slog through the murky political terrain of "Big Italy" - as corrupt as New York's Little Italy, but on a national scale - the novel ends on a tender note of forgiveness. Williams' pared-down descriptions and staccato dialogue are a constant pleasure.

We accompany one of the Met's star acts in Graham Brown's *Blue Murder* (Little, Brown £15.99). Tommy Fox has just been promoted to a top admin post but, a copper to his fingertips, he is soon leading an investigation into a multiple-murder off the Cyprus coast. This exotic locale rapidly gives way to London's

seedy backstreets and the murky world of porn movies.

Formerly a senior CID man, the author has a formidable grasp of police procedure. "Her hair was in that state of regulated disorder thought by many women to be stylish" - and rather low on humour. Although the creaky constabulary banter is somewhat reminiscent of Dick Green, a pacy plot keeps you turning the pages.

At the end of an interminable British winter, a new whodunit featuring Majorca cop Enrique Alvarez is welcome as a week in the sun. Though *An Artistic Way to Go* by Roderic Jeffries (HarperCollins, £14.99) is somewhat slow off the starting block, you instinctively know that a character labouring under the pet name of Bunbunkins will not be long for this world. Sure enough, murdered art dealer Oliver Cooper turns out to have defrauded a Mafia boss and diverted the irrigation water of his peasant neighbour. Even his glamorous wife has her reasons for welcoming widowhood. Inspector Alvarez tackles this conundrum with his customary savvy. As enjoyable for the setting as the solving, the plot is expounded with an engaging lightness of touch.

You even have to watch out when wandering in the countryside, because at any moment you might be snapped by a photo-mapping satellite; these, Davies informs us "are capable of recognising small objects such as a car or a garden shed". And there is worse to come, because soon doctors

The eyes don't have it

Confused rant obscures the argument. By Peter Marsh

If you live in London, according to Simon Davies, it is hard to go anywhere "without feeling you're being watched". Most sensible people reading this sentence will find their eyes popping with disbelief. Whatever the problems of living in London, where you can drop dead in the street without anyone noticing, being watched is not among them.

Davies is concerned about privacy, or lack of it. He reckons the information society is creating a mass of surveillance mechanisms which those in power are using to monitor everyone else. Closed circuit cameras, smart cards, computers, even telephones - all are employed to check up on our activities.

Thus the UK civil service has an "ingrained hostility to privacy" - a sentence which is pretty well meaningless. Some experts, Davies says, reckon "the invention of printing and the development of newspapers

will be implanting microelectronic devices in people's brains. Davies warns with baleful relish: "When our masters decide that biological identification will be mandatory to operate their wonderful technology, the surveillance web will be complete. Human and machine will be one."

Although some of Davies's fears have some justification, the breathless, over-hyped

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style of the book fails to carry the argument. Instead the reader is dazzled by passages seemingly assembled by an out-of-control mincing machine.

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BOOKS

Children's books

Creepy crawlies and other monkey business

Some will thrill to the tales of terror in the latest stories; for others there is gentler fare. By Carolyn Hart

Although you might sue theatres now days for frightening your children, no one has yet tried to do the same to children's publishers. Perhaps British infants, brought up on a diet of *Stewelpeter* and *Ruthless Rhymes*, are immune to literary terrorism, but recently I wondered whether to try wringing some compensation out of David Pelham, whose *Sensational Sumburger* (Cape) reduces my son to a heap of neurosis each time he sees it. Luckily, David Pelham's latest book isn't nearly so frightening. *Creepies Creep* (Collins £5.99) sounds horrible, but is nothing more than a mild pop-up book in which owls blink, foxes slink and ducks dip. Even so, you have to watch out for the crocodile on page 12.

Some of my son's favourite picture books rely heavily on the suspenseful build up of fear. *Shhhhh!* by Sally Grindley (ABC £7.95), in which the reader, by means of peepholes and flaps, creeps closer and closer to the sleeping giant, is one of them. *Into the Castle* by June Crebbin (Walker £5.99) is similar. Here two children, a baby, a horse and a dog set off to investigate the castle on the hill. They say a monster lives inside, but no, that couldn't be... Crossing the creaking drawbridge, tiptoeing over the flagstones in the courtyard and down the cellar steps, they find a huge door with a heavy iron key. What's on the other side? Run! It's the monster. Shrieks of terror all round and, for the hapless adult, pleas for it to be read again and again.

There is nothing to fear in *Buzz Buzz Buzz* (Walker £5.99), a delightful story by Colin West about an irritating bee who is told to buzz off by a variety of animals until he meets the Marilyn Monroe of the butterfly world. "Won't you buzz around with me?" she implores him.

Shrieks of terror all round and pleas for it to be read again and again

The mad, Muttleyesque dog in Adrienne Geoghegan's first children's book, *Dogs Don't Wear Glasses* (Magi £5.99), is a superb invention: a long-suffering hound named Seymour whose hyperactive, short-sighted owner, Nanny Needles, spends a whole day getting things wrong and then blaming Seymour.

The star of Charlotte Voake's new book, *Mr Davies and the Baby* (Walker £5.99), is also a dog. Mr Davies is a key scotch carrier who loves going for walks with a baby and its mother. Once outside the gate Mr D's delinquent tendencies come to the fore as he races about chasing cats and barking at cyclists. The baby loves Mr D but his mother is less enthusiastic. Much of the pleasure of this simple story lies in Voake's illustrations, which combine a scatty charm with an acute eye for the minutiae

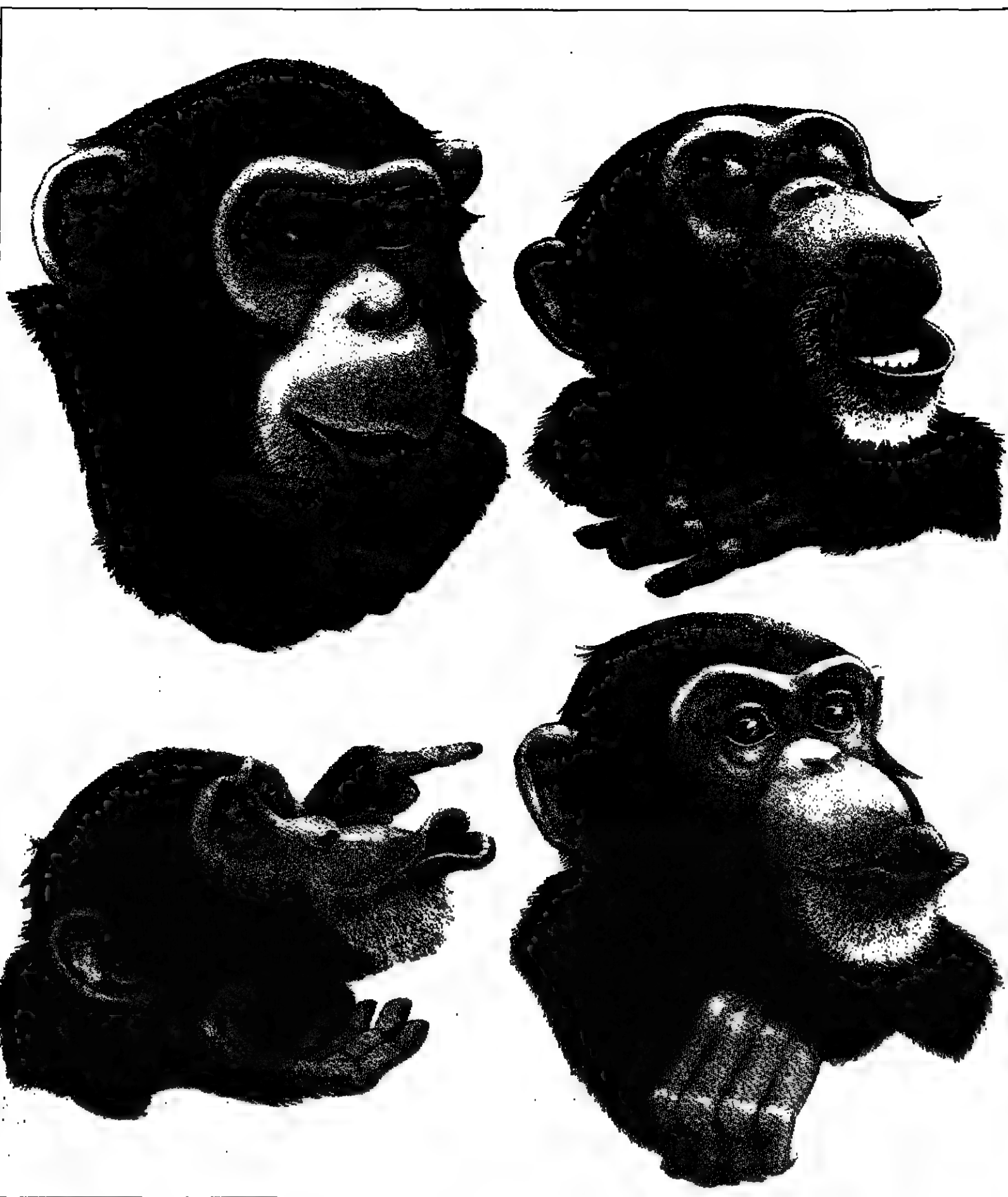
of infant life.

By contrast, the dog in Benedict Blathwayt's new book, *Kip A Dog's Day* (Julia MacRae £5.99), is a working one, a responsible sheepdog who lives on a Scottish farm. Kip gets up early to round up the sheep, helps the farmer take them to the show and chases them when they escape, before settling down to a well-earned supper. In *Kip*, Blathwayt has more or less dispensed with words, relying instead on his fine, detailed drawings to tell the story.

Good picture books for older children - say 5-7 year olds - are often difficult to find, but they are a useful way of making the transition to wordier books. One worth investing in is *Seeing Red* by Sarah Garland (Andersen Press £5.99), a story about a resourceful little girl whose quick-thinking saves Britain from Napoleon's invading army. Brilliantly illustrated by Tony Ross, this is an inspiring tale involving complex notions about history, independence and bravery in the face of adversity.

Joyce Dunbar's *Indigo and the Whale* (Frances Lincoln £5.99) explores the complicated business of finding one's own place in the world. A small boy from a sea-faring family longs to be a musician. "But we're fishermen," argues his father. "You can't eat tunes." Armed with a magic pipe and in the company of stern whales, the boy reconciles the two opposing forces in his life in this dreamy, thought-provoking book.

The *Oxford Funny Story Book* (£12.99) has 28 stories by writers as diverse as Bel Mooney, Richard Crompton and Jan Mark. Potentially hilarious situations include a kidnapping that goes wrong, a girl who hates washing, a romantic frog, and a sad pirate called Short Bob Silver and his sick parrot. Dennis Pepper adds this exuberant collection. For children over seven.



Richard Brassey's indispensable phrasebook "How to Speak Chimpanzee" has now been published in paperback (Dolphin, £3.99). Illustrations (clockwise from top right) show the emphatic "West", the company-seeking "Hooli ho - Hooli ho!" the request for food "Ough, ough ough", and the sound of unbridled self-satisfaction "Aaaa"

Fiction for older children

Making up and making out

Carolyn Hart finds some unusually well-written titles for teens among the best on offer this spring

Although Lara Harte's first novel, *First Time* (Phoenix House £14.99), was not intended for the teenage market, it is nevertheless a gripping portrayal of a 15-year-old girl stumbling, unprepared, into an adult world.

Middle class Dubliner Cassandra, anxious about the new school year, falls under the spell of Emma, a poor girl from Kilmore. Being tough and sassy, Emma wears make-up in school, sports a nose ring and has two smokes on Fridays to celebrate the end of the school week. With a learning curve like that, who needs homework, and soon Cassandra has abandoned books for the less subtle charms of cigarettes, boys and black eyeliner.

Not surprisingly, it all ends in disaster when Emma turns against her new protégé spreading mali-

cious gossip about her among their peers.

First Time will terrify anyone over the age of 30, but it marks an interesting development in books written for young adults. For a start, it is extremely well-written, without any of the hysterics that commonly afflict fiction for adolescents. It also treats teenagers as intelligent people with valid lives of their own and, since Harte is only 19 herself, it has a deeply genuine feel to it.

Whatever else it may do, *First Time* certainly sets new standards for the teenage fiction market, unmet for the most part this spring, although some titles do stand out.

Paris Quest and *Amsterdam Quest* by Judy Allan (Julia MacRae £5.99 each, Red Fox pb £2.99 each) are two novels in the new teenage High-flyer Series. Jo and Ruth, earning a precarious living in a travel agency during their year out, are sent off to nurture clients in Amsterdam and

Paris. Plenty of scope for hot dates, embarrassing tourists and piles of lost luggage. And in *Johnny Casanova* by Jamie Rix (Walker £5.99), unstoppable sex machine Johnny Worms' campaign to find a girl who fancies him founders on the usual adolescent rocks of flatulence, pimples, little sisters and lack of hard cash. But this is a genuinely funny book, sparklingly well-written by Rix who, apart from being the son of Brian, is a television director and producer in his own right.

For 10-year-olds the choice is less limited, though boys have a raw deal in terms of decent fiction compared to the plethora of titles produced each year concerning the lives of pre-teen girls.

Both sexes, however, will enjoy Rose Impey's *Fireballs from Hell* (Collins £5.99), a novel designed especially for aspirant rock stars - for everyone, in that case. Sam, Jamie and Luke form a band together, find somewhere to practise and get all the right gear. Then

the girls arrive and somehow all the sweet dreams of success are hijacked by the delectable Victoria Topping and her friends. A witty, irreverent (the first condom joke appears on page three) novel aimed at 10-pluses.

More notes on fame can be found in *Starring Alice Mackenzie* by Narinder Dhani (Collins £3.99), a story which exploits the idea of fly-on-the-wall television.

Alice's family becomes the subject of a TV documentary and

although Alice initially shuns the idea of stardom, she suddenly finds herself the centre of attention. How can she keep the cameras trained on her? A funny, thoughtful book about an adolescent's conflicting need for obscurity as well as recognition.

The Lottery makes its first appearance in novel form this month. *Flossie Teacake Wins the Lottery* by Hunter Davies (Bodley Head) is an enchanting story about tough Flossie who wins a million pounds and has great trouble getting to grips with such extravagant wealth.

An "if-only" novel if ever there was one, and already out of date, for Davies wrote this gem when punters were still assured of £10 for three winning numbers. The £9 needed to acquire a slice of Flossie Teacake seems a far better bet.

American insights

Nicholson Baker is fascinated by the word lumber. He devotes 107 pages of this 355-page volume to it. The book itself is the lumber of his own curious, lively mind, an intellectual repository in which reflections about punctuation jostle for attention with brooding thoughts about unfinished model aeroplanes.

Baker is also an expert on the modern cinema projector. Is the "platter" system which replaced reels of film about 20 years ago harder on the print? Some say it is, others say it is not. Baker provides a little more information than you might need on this and other subjects, but he writes in such an inquisitorial and engaging manner that you hardly notice. He drones on, sometimes delightfully and amusingly, about the way our minds work: how we develop ideas, cherish them, then drop them without ceremony. Or how we emerge

from inexplicable mental fogs and appear to see things clearly: "If your life is like real life, there are within it brief stretches, usually a week to 10 days long, when your mind achieves a polished and free-standing coherence. The chanting tape-loops of poetry anthologies, the crumbly pieces of philosophy, the unsmeared barbarisms, the litter torn from huge collisions of abandoned theories - all this nomadic

suborbital junk suddenly, like a milling street crowd in a movie musical, reforms itself into a proud pin-striped, top-hatted commonwealth."

He tells a charming, seemingly inconsequential story about travelling on a bus in New York state when, during a stop, the driver holds up a discarded shoe and asks if it belongs to anyone. When no one answers he climbs out of the bus, flings the shoe into a trash can and off they go. Some time later, a passenger with "disorderly" hair and one stockinged foot comes forward and asks "Did you by any chance see a shoe?" The driver says: "I asked about that shoe

in Binghamton. It's gone now." The passenger apologises for having been asleep at the time and returns to his seat.

Baker tells us that, since that trip, five years ago, he has given up thinking of decorating his apartment with forklift trucks and garden hoses: "Somewhere I just imagined that interest as irretrievably as the bus driver tossed out the strange and man's right shoe."

He muses about "books as furniture" after spotting an advertisement for a pillow company in Wisconsin which features, *inter alia*, a man and a woman and a shelf of books, including *The Wood-Carver of Lympus*, published in 1904 and written by Mary Waller. "The model in the white pajamas and I could be the only two people who have read, or pretended to read, this work in several decades... the pajama woman is asleep, embracing a 72-inch-long body pillow: she is dreaming, needless to say, of disabled mountain men and the bookshelves full of Carlyle that taught them everything they know; *The Wood-Carver of Lympus* waits on her bedside table."

Rich, amusing and provocative stuff. Baker proves - if we need such proof - that American letters are not all John Updike, Lawrence Sanders to literature, or Joan Collins.

Peter McKay

A tribute to two brothers in arms

Frank Field on a moving diary of the first world war

John Bickersteth has produced a classic diary which stands alongside those of Kilvert from the 19th century and Parson Woodforde a century earlier. Each of these works excels because the diarist is writing about what they are doing, seeing and feeling rather than attempting to produce a definitive social history.

And yet, ironically that is what in part they achieve because, from their records, we step as it were, through Alice's looking glass into their worlds - and in the case of the Bickersteths it is a world of almost surreal horror.

The recruitment figures show that the British public had a more sanguine view of events on the Western Front than did their leaders. While politicians shouted that the first world war would be over by Christmas the enlistment figures tell a quite different tale.

More than a million had volunteered within five months of its start, with September 1914 seeing most recruits as the public realised a long war was in store.

The Bickersteth family volunteered, as did so many others, and became a part of the unequal sacrifice which was the inevitable consequence of this voluntary recruitment policy. These diaries are quite distinct from similar efforts.

They are a record built up by three people: the editor's two uncles and his grandmother. Burdon was a cavalry man

and Julian a chaplain at Melbourne's grammar school who returned home at the beginning of 1918 to enlist as an army chaplain.

They wrote from the front to their mother, who distributed their news to other members of the family, building up a permanent 11-volume record while

adding some glorious entries herself. She recalls the night-watchman in the close at Canterbury continuing his round, calling out "all's well" even as Zeppelins were raining bombs on the city.

But the diary does more than this. It relays a message more clearly than, for example, Robert Graves does in *Goodbye To All That*. This is not because the brothers write better English, but because the events they describe are more immediately conveyed.

Life is lived in a collection of details. Julian conveys the very smell of the front: decayed bully beef, sweaty

clothes, latrines, disinfectants and the awful reek of the trenches after an engagement of gunpowder, bodies and blood. The killing and maiming were of mind-numbing proportions.

At times the wounded are brought to the dressing stations and Julian, after days without rest, would eat some biscuits with hands stained with the blood of the dead and dying; there was simply no time or opportunity to wash.

Most of us are aware of the sheer number of the fatalities in the first world war. But these diaries breathe life into mere statistics. It is in reading how the small groups around the two brothers would be almost wiped out in an attempt to take a German trench 160 yards away, often falling, sometimes having to retreat after an initial success, that the full horror is made manifest. Within hours 400 men are reduced to 150 and then immediately thrown back into the fray. And so life goes on for Julian, burying the dead, and pathetically trying to comfort the dying.

There are the trips into no-man's land to recover the

wounded and dead, the search for personal effects, and the never-ending task of writing letters home to loved ones. It is often at such moments that the brothers write some of the most powerful lines ever written from the front: "My nostrils are filled with the smell of blood. My eyes are glued with the sight of bleeding bodies and shattered limbs, my heart wrung with the agony of wounded and dying men."

The diaries are distinguished in two other respects. The attitude of the brothers changes - from wanting to blow the Germans into pieces, a view Burdon keeps pretty well to the

last, to a questioning of the likely impact of this war on society.

The brothers' wider attitudes change too. At the start they exemplify many of the worst attitudes of the upper middle class. By the end they are far less wretchedly ignorant of life outside their privileged circle of public school, Oxford and the professions. The diaries also wonderfully depict the natural and spontaneous demonstration of patriotism which bound together the whole country.

The record is also remarkable for the description of the diarists' Christian faith. The questioning which is apparent in Oswald Creighton's letters to his mother during the same war is curiously absent in these diaries. The rock-like quality of the Bickersteths' faith in such wretchedly cruel conditions is fascinating, and is an important pointer to the society which existed in the years when civilisation changed gear.

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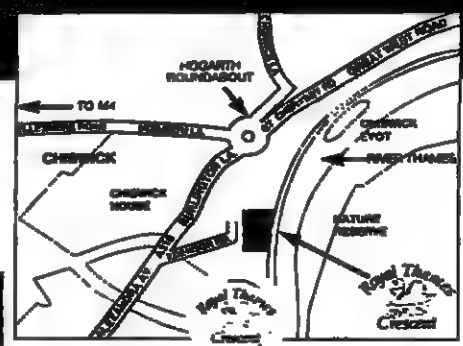
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PROPERTY

Which Portugal do you want to live in?

Mary Wilson looks at the cost of holiday homes and villas in a country with two distinct characters

The attractions of the Algarve, Portugal's popular south coast, are many - not to mention blue skies, sunshine, excellent golf courses and sandy beaches. If you are thinking about buying a second home there, it is possible to achieve a satisfactory rental return, so long as your property is in top condition and in the right location.

The Algarve is not short of property, either new or second-hand. Prices have stopped falling and bargain basement time is over. Vendors of resale properties are beginning to nudge up their prices and new homes, for the first time in our or five years, are rising in value too.

"Prices have come up to an acceptable level," says Michael Carpenter, of Prime Property International. "And there is a very good reason. We have hundreds of properties on our books from under £100,000 to well over £1m."

The Algarve has two distinct characters. In the upmarket, developed areas you can live a civilised, sun-drenched life in an almost British community with your villa, pool and garden taken care of, for a price, so you are free to enjoy all your time there.

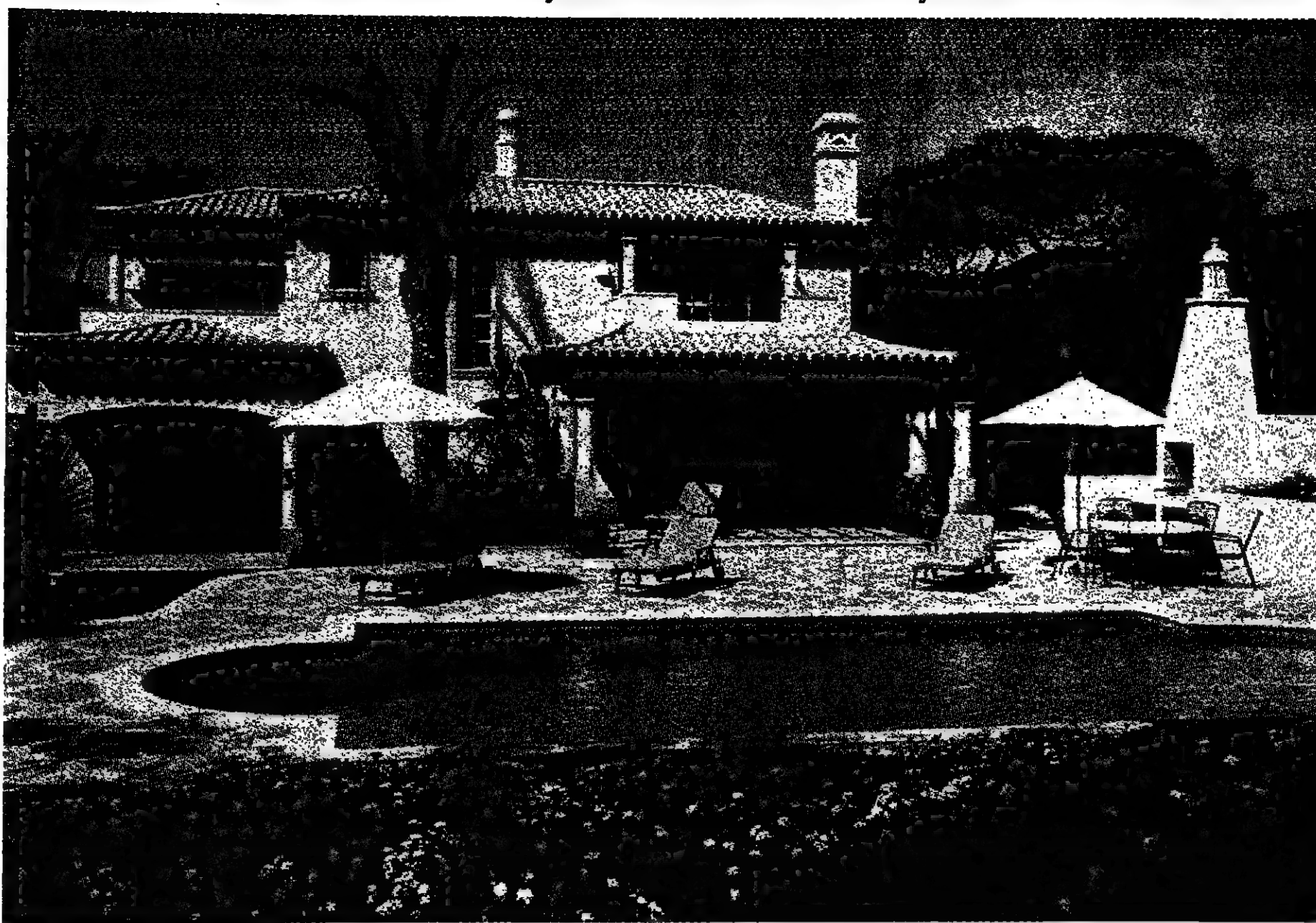
Or, you might choose to search for the real Portugal and buy a villa in the orange groves in the hills, alongside farmers still working the land with donkeys and villages with cobbled streets and white-washed houses.

One of the biggest differences between the two, apart from the lifestyle, is the price. Villas in the upmarket areas, such as Quinta do Lago, Vale do Lobo and Pinheiros Altos can be twice the cost of a village home in the hills.

"Some purchasers do not really appreciate why I probe them gently as to what they are looking for," says Carpenter. "They say, just show me all the villas you have in the price range, but I need to know that sort of lifestyle they want to lead."

Nicky Charlesworth, of Hampsons, which sells both new and second-hand property, says that there is a trend for people to move back to the established developments. This is because of security and the desire to live within easy reach of shops, restaurants and sporting facilities," she says.

At Lakeside Village, one of Bovis' developments at Quinta do Lago, Hampsons is selling a five-bedroom



The show villa at the exclusive Pinheiros Altos development where the primary purchasers are Britons

double-storey detached villa overlooking the lake for £595,000. Far better value - if you prefer to be off the beaten track - is a six-bedroom villa with guest cottage at Alfaias in the hills north-west of Loulé, on the market for £330,000.

In Carvoeiro, an unspoilt fishing village an hour from Faro airport, you can buy a three-bedroom, detached villa in a quarter-of-an-

acre plot with private pool for around £140,000. Prime Property International is selling several around that price.

In Quinta do Lago, where you are unlikely to hear Portuguese spoken, a similar house would cost around £300,000. There the inhabitants are largely British, with some Belgians, Germans and Italians and a few Scandinavians.

Prime Property International has two-bedroom apartments on Quinta do Lago priced from £115,000 to £135,000, and has recently sold a four-bedroom villa with pool there for around £450,000 including furnishings.

One advantage of buying a property on a big new development is that sometimes it is the only way to become a member of a particular golf club. At Sao-Lorenzo, Bo-

other development, down by the beach at Quinta do Lago, low-built blocks of flats are going up in a private cul-de-sac, alongside one of the best golf courses in the Algarve.

"We are starting to build the last three blocks of the development this month," says Ann Mills, sales manager, "and once these have gone, the membership will be closed." Prices range from £28,000 to

£230,000 for a three-bedroom apartment.

Another option is to buy a plot, although many people find it taxing to buy something not yet built.

"You have so many decisions to make about its construction, the design and the finer details, that generally speaking people prefer something which is built," says Carpenter.

Pinheiros Altos, the exclusive development with another excellent golf course alongside Quinta do Lago, is owned by a Middle Eastern company, but run by a British management team. There the primary purchasers are British and Belgians. "We also have a few Dutch, a few Russians and one or two Germans," says Dominic Pasqua, the sales and marketing manager. "So far no Portuguese have bought, but then we have not marketed it in Portugal at all."

Until now, only plots were for sale and, out of the 51 available, seven remain. Purchasers who bought a couple of years ago have seen their investment appreciate sharply. Several purchasers who picked two or three plots have successfully re-sold them at increases averaging around 80 per cent.

Price depends on location. The lowest increase was 29 per cent but one plot, purchased in 1993 for £85,140, was sold last year for £237,000 - an increase of 178 per cent. Work has just started on a village of one, two and three-bedroom apartments and three-bedroom townhouses alongside the fairways.

Additional facilities will also be added, including six tennis courts, two swimming pools, a restaurant and a bar. Prices here will range from £175,000 to £320,000. The remaining plots are priced between £110,000 and £193,000 and the villa, built to your design within an agreed external framework, from around £180,000.

The cost of owning and running a villa in somewhere like Pinheiros Altos is not cheap. This a rough guide: there is an annual municipal property tax of 1.1 per cent (average £700); community fees which cover road maintenance, common parts and 24-hour security, £1,788; management services which are optional - maid service £3.54 an hour; garden maintenance, £138 a month; swimming pool maintenance, £28.50 a month; and administration, which includes paying bills and weekly visits to the villa, £42 a month.

However, a completely hassle-free existence on a well-run development is precisely what purchasers are prepared to pay for.

Pinheiros Altos, 0171-602 9922

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INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY ADVISERS

Let's go skiing," my wife Jenny said to me one February morning as we sat in the sun on a warm café terrace in Aix-en-Provence. I was perfectly happy just where I was, but she is sometimes taken by fanciful urges to travel. "Let's go," she suggested, "to Switzerland."

Now, bless her southern French soul, my wife has the odd idea that snow is something fun, even romantic - for her it is the festive material that once every few years lightly dusts the tops of the ornamental palm trees along the Promenade des Anglais, and then politely disappears.

I, on the other hand, having grown up in Ottawa, the coldest capital in the world after Ulan Bator in Mongolia, have a far more objective view of winter. I hate it. For me it is a bad dream six months long: howling Arctic winds, salt-rusted cars that refuse to start, fingers that behave like frozen fish sticks.

The Eskimos of the Canadian north, it is said, have dozens of different words to describe snow. So have I, but none of them is polite. Northern winters are one good reason to live in southern France.

"It's impossible," I sighed and settled back in my chair, inwardly rejoicing. "It's been a rotten year for snow. Especially in Switzerland."

"Nonsense," she said, and immediately began making lists of objectionable items: scarves, woolly hats, snow chains and the like. I was firm, but she was firmer.

On the evening we arrived in the Swiss mountain village of Kandersteg, the weather changed: fluffy white snowflakes began falling heavily.

They were still falling heavily the next morning as we sat eating breakfast at a picture window in the chandeliered, fin-de-siècle dining room of the Hotel Victoria. Jenny was enchanted with the view - a thick white nap of snow stretching away across open pastures, stands of tall pines with heavily loaded boughs, and, no distance away, the base of forest-covered mountains leaping vertically towards the sky.

Even I had to admit this was not as dull as the interminable, bare, flat frozen shield of eastern Canada. The Balmhorn, 12,132ft; the Doldenhorn, 11,949ft; Blüemlisalp, 12,014ft; these and a dozen other peaks rearing up just outside the window all looked as unreal as propped-up cardboard stage sets.

In fact, there was something of a fairy-tale quality not just

Skiing Reluctant snowman

Nicholas Woodworth, against his will, has fun in Kandersteg

BANX



to the bowl of Bernese Oberland mountains in which Kandersteg sits, but to Kandersteg village itself.

In the 1950s it was already a going concern, a staging post on a trade route over the mountain passes to the south. Today, immense and solid, the age-darkened façades of its wooden chalets and inns are sculpted, chiselled, painted, decorated and inscribed in Teutonic script with a detail and intricacy reserved everywhere else for lace.

On Kandersteg's crisp, snowy thoroughfare there were no steamy burger bars, no while-U-wait muffler garages, none of the messy sidewalk results the rest of the world puts up with after it walks the dog. How do the Swiss do it? Without coyness or pretension, they somehow manage to make their winters as civilised, as amenable and pleasing, as their summers.

Well-dressed women walked down the street holding umbrellas against drifting snowflakes. Red-cheeked babies swaddled in blankets were pulled along in miniature wicker-wagon sleds. But elegant and pleasing as it all was, I was not allowed simply to admire the Swiss

I assured Kuenzi he had to be kidding - if I managed to stay upright at all I might do 50km in about two weeks.

But, as I found myself admitting over the next few days, the great thing about cross-country skiing is that you can do it quite happily at any level - from the simple trudging pace that I began with, to the more extended and energetic movement of the experienced skier, to the fluid, skating motion that has the experts flashing past and out of sight before you even notice them.

And, for a novice like me, an even greater thing about the trails of Kandersteg is that the slower one skis, the more time one has to notice the world around.

Some trails wound about through the village itself. A year-round resort, Kandersteg also remains an active farming community. I enjoyed skiing past wooden farmhouses where the smells of the barnyard mingled with the fragrant odours of cabbage cooked with cumin, past fields where shaggy ponies rolled in snow, past dairy farms where metal milk churns hung beneath icicle-draped eaves.

Despite the snow all about them, it was warm enough for ducks to splash about in the Kander River, for trout to fin their way through clear water under its wooden bridges.

Kandersteg had its wilder side, too. High above the village through pine forests, accessible only by a chairlift ride and a winding piste through the woods, lay the frozen alpine lake of the Oeschinen. Surrounded by towering cliff faces that appeared and disappeared, mirage-like, through shifting cloud and winter haze, frequented in winter only by lonely ice-fishermen, it is a sublime place for cross-country skiing. On the day we slid across its frozen surface it was as wild as Lapland, as uninhabited as Siberia.

Is there a difference between the Oeschinen and other, ruder parts of the northern world? On the way down, the chairlift attendant wrapped a red rug around our knees. In the valley below waited a crisp white Swiss wine and a cheese fondue dinner, a Bach organ concert in the steeped church beside the Hotel Victoria, and soft eiderdown duvets to drift away in.

My wife may just be right, after all. Snow can be fun. Nicholas Woodworth's stay in Kandersteg was arranged by Inntour, specialists in European cross-country ski holidays. Hovingham, York YO6 4JZ, tel: 01653-628211, fax: 01653-628741.

COLLECTING

Pent-up demand finally spills into the saleroom

Antony Thorncroft on a timely boost for the picture trade

Things are looking up at last - in the picture trade. At Christie's last week a painting by John William Waterhouse, "Boreas", showing a pretty girl grappling with the wind, sold for £848,500, easily a record for this late Victorian artist and double the pre-sale estimate.

The painting is very much to the taste of Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber, the composer, and he is almost certainly the buyer. But the amount he had to pay confirms that there are some other enthusiastic bidders for the best of 19th century art, even if "Boreas" was painted in 1903.

There is perhaps only one other painting by Waterhouse in private hands which would fetch this kind of money but the high price should draw out other comparable icons of Victorian art. This is what the trade needs - top quality paintings to sell.

For, in spite of the success of the Waterhouse, only 58 per cent of the 290 paintings offered at Christie's found buyers. The auction was padded out with the tired and the unexceptional, works which attracted few bids.

Even so, expert Martin Beesly was optimistic. A number of paintings which had been unsold at previous auctions appeared again and found buyers. For example, "Boreas and Orithyia" by Oswald von Glehn fetched £17,350 in 1994 it was unsold at £12,000. The pent-up demand of collectors is spilling out into actual purchases.

Sotheby's was offering no masterpiece in its Victorian sale but demand was stronger across the board, with the auction an impressive 86 per cent sold. The Victorian Master of moonlit nights, Atkinson Grimshaw, seems to be much sought after, and the top price paid, for a typical work by Godward of a young girl admiring herself, went for almost twice its estimate, at £107,100.

It is not only Victorian art that is showing signs of revival. The recession hit hardest 20th century British art, especially the work of the Newlyn School and the Scottish Colourists. Many paintings sold in 1995 are still worth half their purchase price, but certain 20th century artists are in demand, notably L.S. Lowry.

The fact a big lottery project, a cultural centre in his native Salford, carries his name has helped stimulate interest in his work. And London's leading dealer Richard Green opens an exhibition of paintings on Wednesday, all for sale, priced between £15,000 and £180,000.

Lowry seems to exercise an emotional appeal over self-made men, some of whom buy no other artist. His prices have more than doubled in the last decade, helped by an exhibition in 1991 at Crane Kalman, which sold 20 works, and the dispersal of the collection of Lowry's friend Geoffrey Beu-



This painting by Waterhouse sold for £848,500 at Christie's in London last week. The price was a record for the artist and twice the pre-sale estimate.

nett, which secured a record auction price of more than £150,000 for one large work, "Punch and Judy". So great is the demand for a Lowry that one of his five-minute sketches, measuring just 4in by 7in, sold last month for almost £20,000, as against a £5,000 estimate.

The interest in Lowry has also helped the prices of his cheaper followers, Helen Bradley, Susie Pollen or Sotheby's notices many more private buyers at the 20th century auctions, which makes the market

uncertain. They are spending up to £10,000 on a good picture, usually figurative, to decorate their home, which makes their taste individualistic.

The dealers are sticking to those artists whose work is easy to sell on - Seago, Russell Flint, Dawson - but there is less interest in prolific painters like Bratby; potential bidders are waiting for the very best examples. Jonathan Horwich of Christie's makes the familiar point - good demand for the very best: little interest in the mundane.

Richard Green deals in most fields of art and reckons that: "The market is better than a year ago, but people are not prepared to pay the frothy prices of the late 1980s, which is a good thing. We are back now to the price levels of 1984-85."

But certain British artists - Munnings, Lucian Freud, Stanley Spencer - have managed to buck the downward trend, and anything of real quality, of whatever period, will do well. The Maastricht Fair last month was the best for many years for the picture dealers, especially those offering good works by Dutch and Flemish Old Masters.

They will be looking to re-stock and will have good opportunities at the summer Old Masters sales in London. Sotheby's is offering on July 3 works from the collection of the Yorkshire businessman Enrico Fattorini, including a courtyard scene by Pieter de Hooch which carries an estimate of £2m. In 1987 it sold for £17,500.

Old Master paintings are a difficult area - for many new collectors their religious or mythological imagery means nothing - but a fine Old Master is so much cheaper than a mundane Impressionist and this message is getting across. Also picking up is 18th century British art. Sotheby's had an encouraging auction on Wednesday which was almost 70 per cent sold by lot. A race-horse painting by James Seymour made £419,500, well over double the estimate and a record for the artist, while an early portrait of Queen Elizabeth I by Van der Meiden went for three times its forecast, at £128,000, to an American buyer.

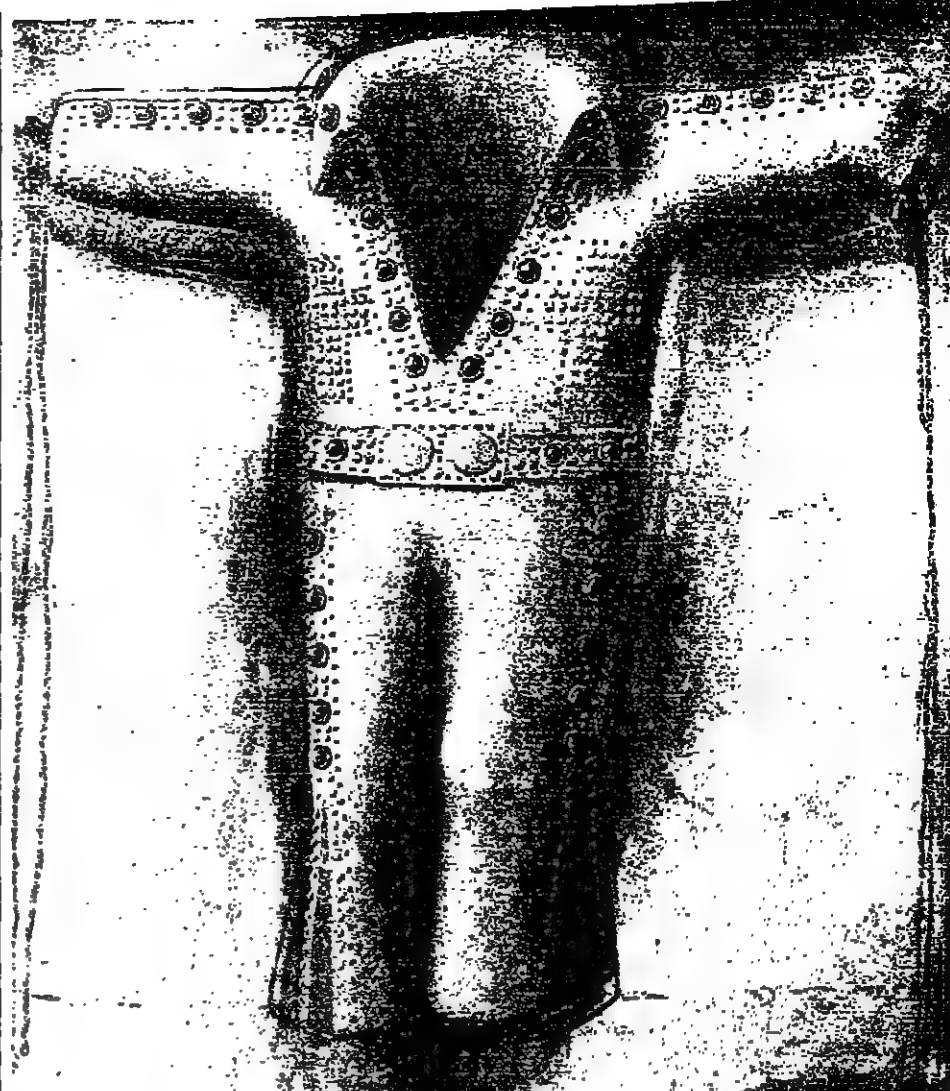
The improvement in demand for British art reflects, in a diminished way, the revival in big money art, the masterpieces of Impressionism and the 20th century. These are the basis of the fortunes of Sotheby's and Christie's and, after four bad years, 1995 was very encouraging, with Sotheby's increasing sales in this sector by 94 per cent to £229m and Christie's by 67 per cent to £220m. Six paintings sold for more than \$12m last year, with Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber paying the most, \$23.1m, for a Pic-

asso portrait at Sotheby's.

Attention is switching to the late spring sales in New York where Christie's has pulled off a coup by securing seven important works from the collection of the late Joseph H. Hazen, the Hollywood producer.

These include a Degas "Femme au tub", which should make \$8m, plus \$1m-plus works by Gris and Miró. Last November Sotheby's sold 15 works from the same source for \$51.8m. It is unusual for sellers to switch auction houses but Christie's managed to dispose of more works within, or above forecast, in the November auctions than his rival and it has a good track record in Degas.

Christie's also has the most expensive painting on offer, a Gauguin sunflower picture, estimated at up to \$10m. Sotheby's is hoping for \$4m each for works by Picasso and Vuillard but both houses must be disappointed that last autumn's buoyant sales have failed to draw out even better pictures. The demand is there but owners are reluctant to sell.



Alexander Guy's Crucifixion

Glasgow Museums, Gallery of Modern Art

Glasgow deserves better than this

I don't like contemporary art... I find it boring, the man with the paint brush motif on his tie said. Nothing wrong with that, you might think - except that the man was Julian Spalding, director of Glasgow Museums, who, for the last five years, has had the unique privilege of spending the income from a £3m investment by Glasgow City Council on contemporary art.

Spalding's choice is on view to the new Gallery of Modern Art in the city, filling the 24,000ft of exhibition space created by the £7.2m conversion of the former Royal Exchange, one of Glasgow's finest 18th century buildings. The sole criteria for selection was that the work be by living artists.

What an opportunity. In this position of unique privilege, Spalding's views on contemporary art are of vital interest. And he has never been afraid of expressing them.

On taking up his task five years ago, he made it known that his selection would be a declaration of war on the "self-interested establishment" which promotes "art for an elite..." in favour of work defined by himself of course, as striving to reach out to everyone. It would be at once both profound and popular, above all positive, defining the role of the new gallery as being "in the entertainment business."

Looking at the work chosen, however, positive thinking art seems to consist of a core of Scottish figurative painting from the now not so new Glasgow Boys - Stephen Campbell, Ken Currie, Peter Howson and Adrian Wisniewski - who found fame in the 1980s, and their senior John Bellamy; a few abstract pieces by the likes of Alan Davie and Bridget Riley; some ethnic bits and bobs heavy on Australian aboriginal paintings; a few photographs and the odd piece of sculpture, connected out of bits and pieces and juddering into spasmodic, noisy motion.

And he could have had anything in the world. Oh dear.

Spalding's taste, which he has been permitted to indulge so monstrously, seems to have been formed some time in the late 1960s. This would explain his enthusiasm for Bruce Lacey and Allen Jones, his notion of fun as embodied in the fat ladies of Beryl Cook, and his commissioning of Niki de St Phalle to ruin the building's classical tympanum. She has produced a horrid mirrored mosaic and covered the entrance area walls with yet more mirror, ominously cracked, a warning to the visitor that all is not well within.

If only there had been one or two really good pieces of work - something by Bruce Nauman, say, or Agnes Martin or even Lucian Freud if serious figure painting was to be the dominant theme. It might then have been possible to forgive the rest, the relentlessly second rate, chosen to fit a patronising notion of the "popular", which exists only in Spalding's head.

For him "popular" seems to mean pictures of people - bad paintings, ugly photographs, horrid sculptures. It does not

matter so long as they are human beings. Not through ignorance, but certainly through prejudice, he chooses to ignore the non-figurative tradition which has been to most significant contribution this century to the development of art, and which is the root of the flowering of conceptual, installation, film and video-based work that he brought young Scots such as Douglas Gordon, Dalzell & Scullion and Kate Whiteford to that international recognition he views with such disdain.

In private, Spalding is entitled to his opinions. In a public role entrusted to him, he has misrepresented the state of contemporary art so badly that the collection already has a weary, stilted air, the argument of a pabore. As the income from seccomell's generous investment continues to roll in, the situation can be rectified, and should be as a matter of urgency, so that Glasgow's investment in living art may attain the quality and integrity the city deserves.

Lynn MacRitchie

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ADELAIDE

EXHIBITION
Art Gallery of South Australia Tel: 81-8-2077000
● Arthur Streeton 1867-1943: retrospective exhibition of the art of the Australian landscape painter Arthur Streeton. The display features works from throughout his career, including his early impressionist work, his later, large rural landscapes and his views of Sydney Harbour; to Apr 14

AMSTERDAM

CONCERT
Concertgebouw Tel: 31-20-5730573
● Amsterdam Loeki Stardust Quartet: perform Spanish court music by La Spagna, 16th century dances, canciones and fantasias; 11am; Apr 7
● Nederlandse Kamerorkest: with conductor Hartmut Haenchen, soprano Barbara Schlick and alto Katarina Karnaus perform works by Van Wassenaer, Pergolesi and Locatelli; 8.15pm; Apr 10, 13, 14
EXHIBITION
De Nieuwe Kerk Tel: 31-20-6268168
● The Buddhas of Siam: exhibition showing art treasures of Thailand. Among the exhibits are several buddhas and works expressing the life of Buddha; to Apr 15
OPERA
Het Muziektheater Tel: 31-20-5518117
● La Bohème: by Puccini. Conducted by Hartmut Haenchen and performed by De Nederlandse Opera. Soloists include Roberto Aionica, Paul Whelan, Ainhara Artale and Lucio Gallo; 8pm; Apr 8, 11, 14 (2.30pm), 16, 19

ANTWERP

CONCERT
De Vlaamse Opera Tel: 32-3-2336808
● Galina Stamenova, Morris Powell and Andrew Wise: the violinist, horn-player and pianist perform Brahms' Sonata for Violin No.3, Op.108, Sonatasatz and Trio in E flat, Op.40; 0.45pm; Apr 10

ATHENS

CONCERT
Athens Concert Hall Tel: 30-1-7222633
● Matthias Fassion: by J.S. Bach. Performed by La Camerata, Orchestra of the Friends of Music, the Cappella Istropolitana, the Städtischer Konzertchor Dülburg and the Boys' Choir of the German School of Athens, conducted by Mihaila Caridis. Soloists include soprano Ute Selbig, alto Daphne Evangelista, tenors Kimon Vassilopoulos and Jörg Hering, basses Robert Holl, Robert Holzer and Christophoros Stamboilis, organist Rudolf Scholz, harpsichord-player Katerina Ktona and cellist Aristea Candis; 7.30pm; Apr 7, 8, 9

ATHENS (USA)

EXHIBITION
Georgia Museum of Art Tel: 1-706-542-3255
● From Bonnard to Toulouse-Lautrec: Avant-Garde Printmaking in France in the 1890s: this exhibition provides an opportunity to see prints by artists who helped create the publication l'Estampe originale, of which the museum owns a rare, complete set, and from which most of the prints on view originate. The show explores the ways in which avant-gardists in France in the 1890s brought their concerns about contemporary art and life to the print medium. Artists include Pierre Bonnard, Edouard Vuillard, Maurice Denis, Paul Gauguin, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Paul Signac and Jean Cassatt; from Apr 14 to Jun 16

ATLANTA

CONCERT
The Fabulous Fox Theatre Tel: 1-404-861-2000/892 5685
● Isaac Stern, Jaime Laredo, Yo-Yo Ma and Emanuel Ax: the violinist, viola-player, cellist and pianist perform works by Brahms, Mozart and Dvořák; 8pm; Apr 9

BALTIMORE

EXHIBITION
Baltimore Museum of Art Tel: 1-410-398-6310
● Ancient Nubia: Egypt's Rival in Africa: exhibition of 300 objects from ancient Nubia, from the collection of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania. Works in ceramics, stone, ivory and bronze trace a 3,000-year history of Nubia and give a perspective on its volatile relationship with Egypt. Nubia both influenced and was influenced by Egypt culturally. Eventually Nubia conquered Egypt, creating the largest state ever to exist along the Nile (1,2-657BC); to Apr 14

BERLIN

CONCERT
Konzerthaus Tel: 49-30-203090
● Valéry Afanassiev: the pianist performs Beethoven's 11 Bagatelles, Op.119, 6 Bagatelles, Op.126 and 33 Variations on a Waltz by Diabelli, Op.120; 7.30pm; Apr 10
Philharmonie & Kammermusiksaal Tel:



Detail from 'The Parosol', 1777 by Goya, on show in Oslo

49-30-2614383
● Das Sinfonie Orchester Berlin: with conductor Borislav Iwanov and soloists Lilian Gem, Yoshikazu Jumei and Seiko Ezawa perform works by Mendelssohn, Chopin and Tchaikovsky; 8pm; Apr 7
● Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin: with conductor Günter Wand perform Beethoven's Symphony No.4 in B major and Brahms' Symphony No.1 in C minor; 8pm; Apr 7, 8, 9

DANCE

Deutsche Oper Berlin Tel: 49-30-3438401

● M: a choreography by Maurice Béjart to music by Mayuzumi, performed by the Tokyo Ballet; 7.30pm; Apr 10, 11

OPERA

Metropol-Theater Tel: 49-30-202460

● Die Fledermaus: by J. Strauss. Conducted by Günter Jaeschke and performed by the Metropol-Theater. Soloists include Gert Böhm, Bernd Weisse and Daisy Steiner; 3pm; Apr 14

Staatsoper Unter den Linden Tel: 49-30-2032861

● Der Ring des Nibelungen: Götterdämmerung; by Wagner. Conducted by Daniel Barenboim and performed by the Staatsoper Unter den Linden and the Staatskapelle Berlin. Soloists include Polanski, Meier, Jerusalem and Tomlinson; 4pm; Apr 8

BILBAO

EXHIBITION

Museo de Bellas Artes Tel: 34-4-4419536

● La Sociedad de Artistas Ibéricos y el Arte Español de 1925: exhibition of works by Spanish artists around 1925. The display includes works by Rafael Nadal, Francisco Bores, Salvador Dalí, Benjamin Palencia and Carlos Sorio de Tejada; to Apr 14

BONN

DANCE

Oper der Stadt Bonn Tel: 49-228-7281

● Don Quixote, a choreography by Valéry Fassion: to music by Markus, performed by the Ballet der Oper der Stadt Bonn and the Orchester der Beethovenhalle. Soloists include Didier Gattiloff, Danila Mazotta, Inna Zavalova and Vladimir Zolotarev; 8pm; Apr 9, 19

EXHIBITION

Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland Tel: 49-228-9171200

● Alfred Stieglitz: the exhibition presents photographs by the art dealer and photographer Alfred Stieglitz: taken between 1920 and 1930 at his summer home at Lake George, New York; to Apr 14

BOSTON

CONCERT

Boston Symphony Hall Tel: 1-617-265-1492

● Boston Symphony Orchestra: with conductor Seiji Ozawa and violinist Akiko Suwanai perform works by Liszt, Bruch and Brahms; 8pm; Apr 9

BRUSSELS

CONCERT

Palais des Beaux-Arts Tel: 32-2-5078465

● Thomas Hampson: accompanied by pianist Wolfram Rieger. The baritone performs songs by Mahler, Britten, Schoenberg, Zemlinski, Weber and R. Strauss; 8pm; Apr 9

THEATRE

Koninklijke Vlaamse Schouwburg Tel: 32-2-2194944

● Danton's Death: by Büchner (in Dutch). Directed by Theo Boermans and performed by De Trust and De Koninklijke Vlaamse Schouwburg.

DRESDEN

CONCERT

Sächsische Staatsoper Dresden Tel: 49-351-49110

● Christoph Eschenbach and Zsuzsanna Bartó: the pianists perform works by R. Schumann/Debussy, Ravel and Messiaen; 8pm; Apr 11

DUISBURG

OPERA

Theater der Stadt Duisburg Tel: 49-203-30090

● Ariadne auf Naxos: by R. Strauss. Conducted by Kodama and performed by the Deutsche Oper am Rhein; 7.30pm; Apr 10, 12

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The cast includes Peter Tullman, Jappe Class, Bert André and Khaddoun Elmecky; 8pm; to Apr 7 (Not Mon)

CARDIFF

CONCERT

St David's Hall Tel: 44-1222-878444

● Mass in B minor: by J.S. Bach. Performed by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales with conductor Nicholas McGegan. Soloists include soprano Susanannah Waters, mezzo-soprano Catherine Robbin and tenor Mark Tucker; 7.30pm; Apr 14

CHICAGO

CONCERT

Chicago Orchestra Hall Tel: 1-312-421-7340

● Chicago Symphony Orchestra: with conductor Lawrence Foster and pianist Alfred Brendel perform works by Hüssa and Beethoven; 8pm; Apr 11, 13, 16 (7.30pm)

CLEVELAND

EXHIBITION

Cleveland Museum of Art Tel: 1-216-421-7340

● Pharaohs: Treasures of Egyptian Art from the Louvre: exhibition of 30 works of Egyptian art from the Louvre. All important periods in 3,000 years of Egyptian history are represented in the show, which examines royal images in statues, reliefs and steles for insights into traditions and innovations in Egyptian art. The exhibits include the Predynastic Bull Palette, showing the king in the form of a bull trampling an enemy, and the Fourth Dynasty red quartzite Head of Djedefra; to Apr 14

COLOGNE

OPERA

Opernhaus Tel: 49-221-2218240

● Die Zauberflöte: by Mozart. Conducted by Georg Fischer and performed by the Oper Köln. Soloists include Dieter Schweißkart, Rainer Trost, Martina Rüping and Inge Martine; 7.30pm; Apr 12

COPENHAGEN

OPERA

Det Kongelige Teater Tel: 45-33 14 10 02

● Saul and David: by Nielsen. Conducted by Paul Jørgensen and performed by the Royal Danish Opera. Soloists include Aage Haugland, Kurt Westi and Poul Elming; 8pm; Apr 11, 13 (1pm), 16, 18

DUBLIN

CONCERT

National Concert Hall - Geórgios Násístaú Tel: 353-1-6711888

● National Symphony Orchestra: with conductor Colman Pearce and pianist Joanna MacGregor perform works by Walton, Ravel and Borodin; 8pm; Apr 12

DUISBURG

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Theater der Stadt Duisburg Tel: 49-203-30090

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OPERA

Sächsische Staatsoper Dresden



Nicholas McGegan, conducting in Cardiff

Williams, Casken and Holst; 7.30pm; Apr 9
Wigmore Hall Tel: 44-171-8352141

GLASGOW

CONCERT

Glasgow Royal Concert Hall Tel: 44-141-3326633

● Royal Scottish National Orchestra: with conductor Leopold Hager and pianist Stephen Hough perform works by Schwanenka and Mahler; 7.30pm; Apr 13

GOTHENBURG

CONCERT

Göteborgs Konserthus Tel: 46-31-7787800

● Göteborgs Symfoniker: with conductor Neeme Järvi and violinist Cho-Liang Lin perform Sibelius' Symphony No.7, Violin Concerto and Symphony No.5; 7.30pm; Apr 10

HAMBURG

OPERA

Hamburgische Staatsoper Tel: 49-40-351721

● Carmen: by Bizet. Conducted by Philippe Auguin and performed by the Hamburg Oper. Soloists include Moser, Demerjow, Nolde and Grundmann; 5pm; Apr 14, 20 (7pm)

LAUSANNE

CONCERT

Salle du Métropole Tel: 41-21-3122707

● Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne: with conductor Milan Horvat and pianist Andreas Haefliger perform works by Bartók, Beethoven and Mendelssohn; 8.30pm; Apr 15, 16 (8pm)

LEIPZIG

CONCERT

Gewandhausorchester: with conductor Herbert Blomstedt and soprano Felicity Lott perform works by R. Strauss and Brahms; 8pm; Apr 11, 12

LINZ

CONCERT

Brucknerhaus Tel: 43-732-7612

● Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France: with conductor Marek Janowski and pianist François-René Duchable perform works by Ravel, R. Schumann and Stravinsky; 7.30pm; Apr 13

LISBON

CONCERT

Grande Auditório da Fundação Gulbenkian Tel: 351-1-7935131

● Orquestra Gulbenkian: with conductor Rudolf Barshai and pianist Vladimir Foltman perform Brahms' Piano Concerto No.1 and Symphony No.2; 6.30pm; Apr 12, 13 (9.30pm)

LONDON

CONCERT

Barbican Arts Centre Tel: 44-171-6388891

● National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain: with conductor Janos First and pianist Leon McCawley perform Mozart's Piano Concerto No.26 in D, K537 and Bruckner's Symphony No.8; 7.30pm; Apr 11

MILAN

CONCERT

Teatro alla Scala di Milano Tel: 39-2-72003744

● Camerata Köln: perform J.S. Bach's Brandenburg Concertos Nos. 1-6; 8pm; Apr 11, 13, 14

MUNICH

DANCE

Nationaltheater Tel: 49-89-21851920

● Swan Lake: a choreography by Ray Bana after Petipa/Iwanov to music by Tchaikovsky, performed by the Bayerische Staatsballett; 7.30pm; Apr 8, 16

EXHIBITION

Villa Stuck Tel: 49-89-4555510

● Marina Abramovic: retrospective exhibition of works by Marina Abramovic. The display includes video works, photographs of her performances, and other objects created by Abramovic over the last 25 years. Also 12 installations are shown, of which "Cleaning the

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James Morgan

Biggles and the bleating bulldog

Those were the days – of modesty, responsibility and British stiff upper lips

Last week's charity has turned cold. *Le Figaro* in Paris sneered that the mad cow affair had made Britain seek help from Europe "in the name of the dream it had refused to back and a solidarity it had derided". *Figaro* was not alone.

But few would accuse the British press of solidarity. Its leading tabloid, *The Sun*, was uncompromising. "We may appear to have more cases of BSE than France," it said, and it was right. The British 161,000 do in a sense appear more than the 13 French.

But, *The Sun* told us, that is "because we are more honest: The French secretly bury their cases". The *Daily Express* quoted a British

vet who said they called BSE "JCB disease". In Britain a JCB is an earth-mover and corpse burier. But "JCB disease" translates strangely: *maladie de l'engin de terrassement* must flow uneasily from the mouth of the Breton dairy farmer who provides the *Express* with its news.

From *The Sunday Telegraph* we learned of more iniquity. A Euro-subsidy to help Britain cull cows would be treacherously "clawed back". The editor told us that Europe's Common Agricultural Policy was the real villain of the affair. An accompanying article expanded on Euro-trickery – the writer said he once saw a Flemish farmer mixing angel dust, whatever that is, with his animal feed. Back in *The Sun*, the former cab-

inet minister, Lord Tebbit, proclaimed that BSE stood for "Britain Stuffed by Europe". In the *Express*, Sir Bernard Ingham, Baroness Thatcher's former press secretary, explained that this was because of Europe's "inferiority complex" towards Britain.

People wrote in wanting to see the colour of Europe's money. Members of parliament spoke of Europe's plot to bring down Britain's agriculture. So the two patriotic themes of the past fortnight evolved: blame the foreigners and demand his cash.

Some readers may, like me, have been reared on a literary diet of Biggles and G.A. Henty. The former was a gallant airman and detective, James Bigglesworth,

who outwitted the King's enemies from the Somme to Singapore. The latter told tales of schoolboys who could, with a piece of string and a catapult, save their friends from certain death at the hands of Neptune or a Puzzy-Wuzzy.

Biggles and Henty were not, as the shrewder reader will have deduced, politically correct. But they knew what it meant to be British. It meant taking the blame, even when unfairly blamed; it meant no recriminations, it meant quiet modesty, accepting responsibility for one's actions, relying on oneself to get out of a mess, and it meant not talking about money.

In a politically correct world, everyone has the right to be a victim. Everyone has the right to

other people's money to compensate for self-inflicted wounds. And patriotism is to bleat about foreigners whose sole aim is to do us down.

Today Sir James Bigglesworth MC is the Conservative Member of Parliament for Derrington & Pluck. In a speech to the House on Mad Cow day he said: "We are faced today with a crisis of our own, albeit unwitting, making. It may have been exacerbated by foreigners but we recognise that the actions they have taken conform with their national interest. And we accept that these have saved us from the humiliation of seeing Salvador ham our meat one day and Somalia the next."

"We all recognise that mistakes,

quite innocently, have been made. We shall overcome their consequences as we have overcome other crises in our long history: by ourselves, and with our own resources. If that means sacrifice, so be it. If that means lifting burdens from the few and placing them on the shoulders of the many, so be it. If there be guilty men let them come forward – but we seek no scapegoats. This may not be our finest hour, let history not judge it our least worthy."

This, of course, is pure fiction: who would have voted for someone who could spout such nonsense and so flagrantly undermine his country's interests?

James Morgan is BBC World Service economics correspondent.

Interview

A real life in front of a screen

Peter Aspden meets Sherry Turkle about the Internet effect

Meet Julia, who will be your companion for the evening. She will not be devoted exclusively to you, for she believes in spreading her affections. It is part of her charm. She also has a snappy line in quips and plenty of attitude. On a good day, she can even fool you into thinking she is human.

Julia is a computer programme, or more accurately a "bot", strutting her stuff on the Internet. She connects from her Pittsburgh base to the online community indistinguishably from a human player. Players can talk to her, she talks back. They gesture, she gestures back. She functions by looking for particular strings of characters in messages typed to her, and answers back appropriately. She is also able to admit ignorance and if confused, changes the subject.

Many rational, intelligent human beings spend hours in front of a screen talking to characters like Julia. Of course, they do not have to be themselves; they can be a man posing as a woman, an apparently docile character trying out some wild sexual fantasies, an alien from another planet.

Another computer programme, DEPRESSION 2.0, is trying to help people cure their psychological problems. They talk to the machine about their needs, the computer is programmed to respond. They go away feeling refreshed, undisturbed. If they need another perspective, they can go online and talk it through with fellow net-surfers. Who needs real human contact?

Such is virtual life on-screen: compelling, seductive, full of limitless possibilities. According to Sherry Turkle's new book, *Life on the Screen*, it is an exciting way of re-defining ourselves as the millennium draws to a close. To others, it is a high-tech hell on earth.

I met Turkle just after she had endured a tough session on the BBC's *Start the Week*. "I am feeling very defensive. Everyone was talking about this terrible addiction, how it is all like a drug, and I'm just sitting there slightly jet-lagged..."

A rare pause in her fluent, fast-speaking conversation. Surely you can understand people's worries, I asked.

"Of course, but I think it all has to do with how a thing looks in its early days. If we had set up this interview by telephone, we wouldn't be sitting here saying, 'My God we were in the virtual reality of a telephone conversation!'. We are pretty comfortable integrating telephone calls with real life because we are used to it."

"People talk on the Internet, then they set up a coffee date in the real, then they go back. I could say to you, who are in my physical life,



Sherry Turkle: It is part of her argument that computer culture is making more concrete the way in which our lives have become fragmented

look there is an online discussion group which I think you'd be interested in, and I am bringing you into my virtual life. You are not being 'sucked into the Internet' – she caricatures the extreme images of her opponents – "but we are comfortably negotiating and navigating the multiple windows which modern life consists of."

It is part of Turkle's argument that computer culture – and the Internet, in particular – is making more concrete the way in which our lives have become fragmented. The "windows" on the computer screen perfectly reflect the various roles we are asked to play in life. But wasn't it difficult for people to cope with?

"But most people do it every day anyway. You wake up as a lover, have breakfast as a mother, drive to work as a lawyer. That is what we are stuck with in modern life. We no longer live in a world in which women have limited roles, staying at home during the day, wearing white gloves on certain social occasions. Those days are over."

"We already have an experience of role-playing and fragmentation. The Internet gives us images of thinking about identity whereby a healthy personality is one which can move easily and fluidly between many aspects of self."

Turkle, a professor of sociology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, made it all sound natural. She said it was important to embrace the fact we lived in a world of greater multiplicity. But didn't most people think that social life had something to do with physical interaction? Wasn't the computer screen a poor substitute?

"They are right – but we have lost the 'great good places' where people used to meet – the café, the local bistro – and it is not the fault of the computer. The breakdown of community predates computer culture. You can sit in an ersatz café in a shopping mall, but you don't know anyone. It is just a reminder of what a café used to be when we still had communities."

The point about the great good place is that there were people

there that you knew. Now when I go online to a discussion group about parenting, for example, I see people...

I interrupt: not "see" exactly?

"No, excuse me, I mean meet people in their virtuality, meet their online personas. It is not the same as meeting them in the real, but there is a continuity in the relationship. People are going online to meet a need which is missing offline."

In her book, Turkle talks of her own formative experiments with playing with her identity: when she studied in Paris, she found that the "French Sherry" did things which the American Sherry did not. I said that being a different person in Paris sounded a lot more fun than being a different person on a screen. She laughed out loud. "I really don't think that one is going to replace the other."

But there were only so many hours in the day. Didn't sitting in front of a screen have an imprisoning effect?

"The screen is extremely compel-

ling. But so is the novel. The novel was invented, people waved children away from it because it distracted them, it took them away from serious history and the Bible. And in the end, we have Shakespeare, the novel, the screen. People find a way of mixing things. The screen can be used in lots of ways. It is a personal and cultural choice."

"My research shows that the time children spend in front of a screen is taken away from the time they spend watching television. Now if you ask me if it is better for a child to sit online, writing interactive fiction with people all over the world or passively watching television..."

A rhetorical raising of the eyebrows. Then back into defensive mode, as the morning's accumulated scepticism began to weigh.

"Look, I am a humanist, I am very sympathetic to people's worries. I am glad to meet you here in person and that we are not doing this interview by fax. I am on the side of the angels. But there is something positive going on here."

I asked her about the depression programme, and of the use people made of the Internet to try to solve their personality problems. Didn't some people who coped happily on the Internet find it hard to switch back to real life?

"I call it the *Cyranos effect*. He went into the virtual reality of letter writing. He won the girl, but he could never believe he was the guy who wrote the letters," she said.

Yes, it did happen, but there were also plenty of positive experiences. "The people who do best are the people who approach it with all the tools of self-reflection and self-observation that they bring to anything."

But wasn't talking about your problems to a computer rather sad?

"Even 10 years ago people thought it was obscene. But now the common reaction is – can I try it? People are no longer comparing it with talking to an analyst, but with self-help books, and it looks a lot better."

Then how about sex on the Internet (known as *TinySex*)? Was this a good idea? It surely wasn't very wholesome – Turkle writes in the book of the fierce debate among the online community on "virtual rape" – projecting a rape fantasy on to a victim via messages on screen.

A long pause, and for the first time she measured her words very carefully. "Whenever there is a new technology, its first use is for some form of sexual expression or stimulation. All we are talking about is people typing dirty to each other. A lot of things are happening online, and some of it is people writing erotic messages."

But is it any worse than phone sex? Or dirty movies? Or having promiscuous sex in the age of Aids?

She said sex on the Internet made people think afresh about ideas such as infidelity and jealousy. "Some people don't mind if their partner just does it on screen. My favourite position, because I think I identify with it, is the one which says, 'I can understand one night in a motel room because she's more beautiful, she's younger, whatever – but talking to someone erotically! That's the best part, the most intimate part'."

I asked her how much time she spent in front of her screen.

"Like many people, most of my working life is spent on screen. And for research purposes I join all kinds of online groups. But I do lots of other things."

Did she still go to cafés?

"I love going to cafés, but I don't like myself. If you are trying to capture the good old days by going to a café called *Bonjour Croissant* in the middle of a mall, and get served by someone wearing a fake French beret, I mean that is not Paris."

"If you offer me that experience versus going online to a virtual community where a group of people have been talking about a set of common themes over the past six months, I know which feels more 'real' to me."

Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet by Sherry Turkle, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £13.95.

practice. Syd and I were delighted to win the first of our competitions. These were more terrifying than I remembered them as a child. But we had the hair spray on the coach just the same.

Then came the *Varsity Match*: with arduous training and intricate steps choreographed for the waltz, quickstep, jive and cha-cha. We also learned to "walk-on" and how to apply the fake tan. The top eight couples are selected only the night before the competition so emotions run high. The top couples from Oxford, but only the top ladies from Cambridge partnerships, can be awarded a half blue. For, unlike the Olympics committee, the Cambridge University Men's Blues Committee does not think it is a sport.

Now I have a job, it is less easy to find opportunities to dance. One of my favourite places in London is the Palm Court at the Waldorf Hotel, which holds tea dances at the weekend. Only a few younger dancers go there, but the room is always packed for tea. So, this weekend the Waldorf, in a few years, perhaps, the Olympics in Sydney.

Cows and mad veggies

My first flight in an aircraft was as a 22-year-old national serviceman bound from England for Cyprus, then in the last stages of British rule.

I remember the flight mainly, however, because it cost me my virginity as a life-long vegetarian. The chicken lunch served to the troops was so delicious that I have relished chicken and meat ever since.

My mother, who had supervised my vegetarianism, would have regretted my betrayal of what she saw as a clean, ethical and superior way of life.

She had also instilled in me a deep distrust of orthodox medicine – when ill we always consulted a popular Lancashire herbalist – and it was another year after eating chicken before I bravely popped my first aspirin.

On diet and doctoring we were for years regarded as cranks by relatives and friends. In retrospect, though, my mother was a woman ahead of her time. Many of her attitudes on meat eating and health care have become highly fashionable.

Sensitivity and amateur dietetics were at the root of her vegetarianism. She never forgot her distress when as a young girl she took hens to be put to the knife.

So when she married my father, already a veggie by conviction, she had no difficulty in embracing his credo. It was rooted in the progressiveness of the age, part of a nexus of thought which embraced socialism, theosophy, eugenics, naturism and a general belief in the onward march of mankind.

My mother's heroes were George Bernard Shaw and Gandhi. She was less proud of the fact that Adolf Hitler was also a flesh abstainer. But she used to mention his name, too.

Our faith was buttressed by a subscription to the *Vegetarian Messenger*, a monthly medley of reci-

Holidays were usually at a vegetarian guest house run by a Quaker couple

pes, horror stories about meat eating and cruelty to livestock, news about great vegetarians throughout the ages, and adverts for vegetarian hotels, guest houses and camps.

The meatlessness pervaded my early life. During the second world war, our meat rations were replaced by extra eggs and cheese coupons. (Fortunately, we did not practise Veganism, which abhors both eggs and dairy foods.)

Daily dinners at Bury Grammar School, Lancashire, invariably contained meat. They seemed so awful that my class mates envied me lunching at home every day.

Holidays were usually at a vegetarian guest house run by a Quaker couple, Kate and Arthur Ludlow, at Crich, south Derbyshire. Unlike many other such establishments, the food was simple and tasty, dominated by nut and lentil preparations.

Decades before mussels became a household word in Britain, we were tucking into cereals, raisins, almonds and hazel nuts drenched in syrup.

In addition to a sprinkling of Jews and Moslems anxious to avoid eating the wrong kind of meat at any price, most of the other guests were progressive school teachers from Sheffield, Nottingham or other northern cities who liked nothing more than a tramp in the Peak District. Local villagers used to call the "Ludlow Loonies" or "Plus Fours and No Breakfast".

I particularly remember a wonderful old man called Louis Beethoven Prout, a fanatical advocate of the theory that Francis Bacon was William Shakespeare. A mine of information on our daily rambles, he could identify every flower and plant in the hedgerow. And there was a gorgeous Persian lady, called Rozhanak Furkash, whose beauty was as unforgettable as her name.

My diet followed me to Oxford University, although here the faith began to tire a little.

To cater for my oddity, the college butler dutifully purchased meatless sausages for me at a health food shop at the bottom of the High Street. They were awful, a fact which no doubt prepared me for my conquest by chicken at 30,000ft.

That was more than 40 years ago. The world has turned turtle. There is at least one vegetarian alternative in nearly every hotel and restaurant in the land. The *Financial Times* canteen's Christmas menu last year offered Nut Wellington. And now, to cap it all, butchers' shops are deserted, McDonald's, pending supplies of Dutch beef, advertised veggieburgers, and doctors are competing with herds of homeopaths, acupuncturists and herbalists. My mother would have approved.

Maurice Samuelson

Quickstep to the Olympics

Alice Brickwood describes her lifelong affair with ballroom dancing

forms of solitary disco dancing that removed all etiquette and structure, seen by some as liberating. I think it is a tragedy.

Now the old art, which survives mainly in societies and clubs, is becoming popular again, especially after the hugely successful film, *Strictly Ballroom*. The number of dance schools in the UK has increased enormously during the last five or six years to more than 8,000. At Cambridge University, where I gained a half blue in dancing, the largest society, with more than 2,000 members, is the Cambridge Dancers' Club.

In recognition of its popular appeal and 14 years of lobbying, ballroom dancing is likely to be given full Olympic status next year, after completing a two-year probationary period.

Last week there was much discus-

sion about the fact this would bring with it the rather sad requirement of random drug testing. Drugs such as amphetamines, steroids and diuretics are unlikely to be taken by ballroom dancers. But caffeine is also prohibited. This will be a big problem. A day's competition, with all of the qualifying rounds, may last more than 12 hours. While waiting to be called, we drink vast quantities of tea and coffee.

I started dancing as a young girl for purely romantic reasons. My father bribed my brother to partner me. Jason was a rare breed: he gave me three evenings a week and the weekends, on coaches full of mothers and hair spray being shipped to competitions.

As I got older, the main objective was to find a man. The man always leads on the dance floor, and the lady, as in the famous quotation

about Ginger Rogers, has to do everything the gentleman does, only going backwards and in sin heels.

But despite all the excitement of competition, one of the most enchanting aspects of dancing is now, as it was for Elizabeth and Natasha, going to the ball.

The Christmas balls of the Cambridge club were always the most luxurious of the dancing year. With an expectant heart, a new gown and a man in black tie at our side, we would step from our carriages into a room filled with the magic of a past era. About 600 dancers are spiralling round. For five hours the music plays. The clumsiness of an inexperienced polka partner is forgiven in the pleasure of walking in the arms of a man you care for.

From time to time a god of the dance floor appears. In my years, he

was tall, proud, athletic and German. He merely stood in front of you to present his arm: words were unnecessary. Dancing with him was like floating – one scarcely dared to breathe. When he danced Latin, he it with the most beautiful woman, it was impossible to keep your eyes off him – he was arrogant and proud, truly masterful.

As in every sport, dancers must start at the beginning and in Cambridge that came in the form of Glenis and Robin's Absolute Beginners classes. You did not need a partner to go there and after each dance, you changed partner anyway.

I was lucky enough then to find myself on the university team, dancing waltz with a talented and charming man, Sydney. Dancing on the team gives you a regular partner and weekly private lessons. But we spent up to 20 hours a week in

صكنا من الالام

WEEKEND INVESTOR

■ **Results due next week**

Company	Sector	due	Dividend (\$)		
			Amount	Last year	This year
FINAL DIVIDENDS					
AMEC	BSC	Thursday	1.50	1.11	1.50
Abbot Group	ONE	Friday	-	0.588	-
Alpha Airports	SpSr	Wednesday	1.00	3.00	1.75
Champs	N/A	Wednesday	-	-	-
DowHart Group	Text	Tuesday	0.85	2.00	1.00
Eastle Hidge	BuH	Thursday	0.50	0.70	0.40
Handover Am Cap & Inc Tr	Intl	Tuesday	-	-	-
Interstate Capital Group	OFrs	Wednesday	3.75	7.75	4.20
Moss Bros Group	ReGr	Wednesday	3.00	9.00	5.00
Nurilo & Pizzetti	RePd	Thursday	2.16	4.74	2.27
Rainbow Brothers	OFrs	Thursday	3.00	6.80	3.50
Reece	REIT	Wednesday	-	-	-
Ruberoid	BdKa	Wednesday	1.11	4.20	1.80
Sentry Farming Group *	FdPr	Wednesday	-	2.40	-
Sauritz (Jefferson) Group & Sealedairfield	PPRP	Wednesday	0.014	0.038	0.014
TRACKER Network	Head	Thursday	2.70	3.50	2.70
Torrey & Daniels	AIM	Friday	-	-	-
Tutor	Ing	Tuesday	-	-	-
Yule Catco & Co	BdKa	Thursday	-	0.06	0.26
	Chem	Wednesday	2.00	4.50	3.20
INTERIM DIVIDENDS					
Chadley Group Hidge *	PPRP	Thursday	-	1.28	-
Murray VCI	OFrs	Wednesday	-	-	-
Protech Hidge	SEHE	Thursday	-	-	-
Toys & Co	Text	Thursday	-	-	-

■ Night's Insects

Bemrose is to raise £21.5m via a 1-5 rights issue at 825p per share.
Benson is to raise £5.2m via a 1-1 rights issue at 40p per share.
VDC is to raise £2.38m via a 1-5 rights issue at 675p and is also placing 2.24m new 25p shares at 188½p to raise £3.78m.

■ Offers for sale, placings & introductions

Cliveden is to raise £7.4m via a placing.
KISS International is to be valued at \$60m from its flotation.
Maiden Group is to raise £20m via a flotation.
Millennium & Copthorne is to raise about £150m via a placing.
Rockwood Mineral is raising 24.55m via a placing and open offer of 10m shares on a 1-4 basis at 50p.
Readymix is to raise £68m via a placing at 97p and £88m via a 1-3 open offer.

■ Current takeover bids and mergers

Company - bid for	Value of bid in shares	Market price	Price bids bid	Value of bid in \$ mil	Bidder
IBET	20555	208	194%	1.538	Rentfield
CentraGold	30	36	37	16.32	Edco
Elvs (Wimberled)	7600	600	580	3.00	Plumtree Secs
Elvs (Wimberled)	4854	503	580	3.00	Panther Secs
Ennerv	37	33	34	5.96	Redwood
Ferry Pickering	190	182	168	28.13	Wage
Roosa I	11270	1277	1229	1115.97	DOC
Garmore	2254	248	245	340.0	West West Bank
Co.	2504	248	245	126.0	West West Bank
Idol Steam Pipe	1402	144	159	43.8	Sea Containers A
OIS Int. 1	476	81	18	14.28	Abbot Group
OIS Int. 2	397	81	38	8.40	OGC
SEABOARD	5580	594	591	1.538	Central & S West
Trailair House	50	50	44.78	1.00	Kiewit
Tranched	8.61	9%	0	7.36	Wilson Services
Unitech	701	674	674	480.03	Sheba

Bids

Unitech, the power supplies and control systems manufacturer, this week agreed terms for a recommended offer from Siebe, which values it at more than \$500m. The terms are 0.904 of a Siebe share for each Unitech, with a cash alternative of 668.3p. The paper offer was worth 715p when the deal was announced, although Siebe's shares fell back slightly later.

The share offer is at a premium of almost 40 per cent over Unitech's price before the Siebe announcement. It has acquired a 26 per cent stake in the group from Electrowatt. The take-out price represents 26 times earnings per share in the year to May 1995. Siebe said the deal would not dilute its earnings in the first year.

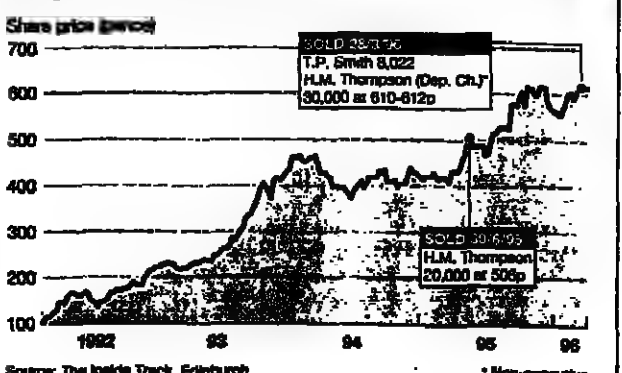
■ Directors' share transactions in their own companies

Company	Sector	Shares	Value \$'000	No. of directors
SALES				
Abacus Group	Dist	10,000	38	1
Boston	InvV	13,000	38	1
Chemring Group	InvV	7,000	28	1
Cranswick	FPSP	10,000	18	1
Finlay Group	Dist	3,338	48	1
Forth Ports	Trans	38,000	338	2
GKN	InvV	5,000	14	1
HTV	Media	4,000	30	1
Holms	Inv	23,800	40	2
Jupiter Int. Goods	InvT	25,000	30	1
Kilnworth, Charles	InvT	4,000	44	1
Lambert Horrell	Text	34,000	44	1
Medley Int.	Res	3,071	12	1
Mengham	Chem	8,500	12	1
Mercury Asset Mgmt	OMGE	4,000	17	1
NHF Group	Dist	7,800	38	1
P&O IR	Trans	25,070	38	1
PBT	Prod	38,000	34	1
Premier Oil	Oil	588,800	88	1
Reuters	Media	12,000	18	1
Southern Vectis	Trans	37,800	31	1
Straus-Sarco	Inv	7,400	38	1
Takara	HRH	6,000	12	1
Tomorrow's Leisure	LHM	3,500,000	210	1
Walmorcha	FPSP	13,682	57	2
Wentland Int'l	FPSP	128,148	348	1
Costa Verde	Text	12,800	38	1
Fuller Smith & Tn *	Brew	38,738	278	3
Heriva	Dist	67,738	691	1
Laino John & W	BCGec	35,000	108	1
Low & Bonar	FPSP	48,184	282	1
Marke & Spencer	PartP	18,714	382	1
Serra Group	Silver	60,000	382	1
Smith & Mawhood	Hth	21,800	38	1
PURCHASES				
SI Smelter Quoted	InvT	14,000	30	1
ASTEC (BSP)	Steel	30,000	82	1
Avoca Group	Media	30,000	14	1
Albion	Text	181,047	180	1
Antofagasta Media	Divi	5,000	18	1
BTR	Dist	10,000	38	1
Boston	Steel	9,000	27	1
Brit Bloodstock Ass	Misc	25,000	38	1
Brit Fitness Grp	Dist	15,000	30	2
Briton Grp	FPSP	25,000	38	1
Burnfield	Inv	20,000	31	1
Cakebread Robey &	Dist	72,040	89	1
Country Casuals	Retail	10,000	18	1
EMAP	Media	3,500	28	1
Eng & Scot Inv	InvT	28,000	38	1
Glass Welcome Pl	Plum	1,000	18	1
Group Dev Gas Tr	InvT	100,000	48	1
Inchcape	Dist	12,000	38	1
Mercury Green Tst	ONP	16,000	38	2
Prudential Corp	LMA	10,000	43	1
Reylon Grp	HQod	5,000	14	1
Robert Waseham	FPSP	50,000	68	1
SGK	BMAM	7,000	18	1
Strind Group	Text	500,000	208	1
Yorshire Food	FPSP	30,000	28	1

1. Δ 1/5, 1/10 Companies most: not the Stock Exchange within five working day of a share transaction by a director. This list contains all transactions (listed and USA), including transactions of options (P) at 100% subsequently sold, with a value over £10,000. Information released by the Stock Exchange March 25-29 1996. Shares traded are ordinary, unless otherwise stated. Δ = A Non-Voting; Δ = Deferred Preference Shares; Δ = A Ordinary Shares; Δ = Zero Dividend Preference Shares; Δ = American Depositary Receipts.
Source: The Inside Track, Edinburgh, 0131-333 7070

Forth Ports

The largest sale of the week was at Forth Ports. Hugh Thompson, the deputy chairman who recently stepped down as chief executive to be replaced by Alister Fleming, sold 30,000 shares at 812p.



In the Pink

Why gold still holds its attractions for many

The metal is a succour in troubled times, says John Train, and some will never prefer funds to jewellery

John Train is chairman of Montrose Advisers, investment managers in New York City

Last year, in a column headlined "Gold's everlasting attraction", I described various investment options. First, I dealt with the metal itself, and the merits of bullion versus coins. Then, comparing coins alone, I looked at those selling at intrinsic value, such as kruggerands and maple leafs, versus those selling at numismatic premiums. (Sticks to the former: there are innumerable ways to lose money in rare coins.)

Then, I discussed equities. Gold mining stocks go up and down two or three times faster than the metal itself. One option is to buy specific mines, the yield from which is partly a return of capital since

partly a return to capital since the asset is depleting. Another is to buy mining houses, which should go on forever. (Incidentally, be sure to establish that any mine you buy has not sold its production too far forward, which is done to finance operations - including capital spending - and to stabilise the selling price at a satisfactory level. Barrick Gold, for instance, has sold its production two years ahead, and some of the Aus-

tralians and South Africans four to eight. Homestake and Newmont do not sell forward. But Africa was a considerable source of forward selling last year, thanks to instability there.)

I ended up suggesting that you should buy a closed-end investment trust selling below net asset value, or else an open-end fund sold without a commission. Since then, though, there has been a powerful move in gold. So, what next?

First, let us look at the supply-demand equation. As I

mentioned last year, a remarkable surge is taking place in Asian gold buying. Indeed, overall world consumption rose 13 per cent last year. On the other hand, production is roughly static; operations in South Africa are troubled and older mines elsewhere are running down.

The production shortfall is being made up from two principal sources. One is gold mining companies selling their production forward; they

Many central banks have
dollars in reserves

want, and not
Fifteen years ago
third of their re
Now, that is do

made available about 900 tons
in 1925.

The other is central banks, some of which have been sellers during the era of dull prices; they provided about 300 tons last year. Scram deal-

This dual solution is not going to be available forever, though. The two sources are drying up; indeed, they are estimated to fall by 800 tons

So much for more demand versus supply. But markets are not that simple. Rising prices usually fuel more buying. Some central banks loaned gold to billion banks

So far, this has been a nice, quiet money-maker for all concerned. But if bullion runs up

Most Swiss bank portfolios once had 10 per cent in gold as an anchor to windward in times of crisis. The idea was to hold enough bullion so that you could get along reasonably for some time if things blew up in your own country. No longer. It was a dead holding for so many years that the Swiss portfolios largely eliminated it.

And yet, the idea does make sense. Troubled times do return and at such times,

banks hold more
reserves than they really
need enough gold.

o, more than a
serves was in gold
wn to 5 per cent

gold has no substitute. Europeans see danger in two directions: in the former Soviet Union, where a number of the former components and Russia itself are unstable, and in the former Yugoslavia.

Consider, too, how the world looks from Asia. China is facing a serious oil shortage: hence its sabre-rattling in the South China sea, where there are promising reserves.

also claimed also by its neighbours. And the Chinese military is menacing Taiwan, presumably to show zeal in the post-Deng struggle. Frightening events - and a stimulus to gold buying.

Then, there is the fact that many central banks, particularly in Asia, hold more dollars in their reserves than they really want, and not enough gold.

Fifteen years ago, more than a third of their reserves was in gold; now, that is down to 5 per cent. Many will want to exchange some of those dollars for more bullion as its

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هكذا من الأصل

Wall Street

And **Lisa Bransten** discovers just why the market hates surprises

The Dow Jones Industrial Average edged to a new record last Wednesday in unusually steady trading given the volatile activity seen at beginning of this year. Although DEC's

Peter R. Anderson, senior vice-president of domestic equity funds at Federated Investors, is cautious about first-quarter earnings.

Dow Jones Ind Average	
Monday	5837.72 + 50.58
Tuesday	5871.88 + 33.96
Wednesday	5889.74 + 18.06
Thursday	
Friday	Closed

The talks between British Telecom and Cable & Wireless, announced last week, seem to have prompted investors to search around for other plausible bid candidates.

Shares in Thorn EMI, the company which is due to demerge its music business in the summer, suddenly surged on Tuesday afternoon on hopes that an overseas bidder might be about to pounce. Pearson

But there were also encouraging signs that British industry remains alive and kicking. Shares in engineering group GKN rose 22 per cent, with the help of a 61 per cent increase in pre-tax profits and a 90 per cent jump in earnings per share; the company's aerospace business performed strongly and it is winning orders in emerging markets.

One of Britain's oldest industrial giants, ICI, also revealed bumper profits in the form of

As the graph shows, small companies have done much better than Footsie stocks in the first part of 1996, although this only reverses their under-performance in 1995. Since smaller companies tend to be



Among the All-Share index constituents, the best gains were

The driving force behind the takeover spree in 1985 was the strong cash flow of the corporate sector.

In a newly published research note, Barclays de Zoete Wedd says: "We expect measures of financial strength, specifically cash flow, to become more important for stock selection."

"As cash flow becomes a more scarce commodity, we expect those companies who have it to be rewarded. Correlations between cash growth and share prices increase as the economic cycle matures."

In other words, cash flow is not so important to investors when the economy is booming and companies can expand by reinvesting their earnings. But when times get tough, and companies have to borrow, investors need to pay very close attention to the health of corporate balance sheets.

BZW says that "stocks which stand out for their improvement in generation of free cash (relative to their valuation) include GUS, Rank, Rexam, Vodafone and BTR."

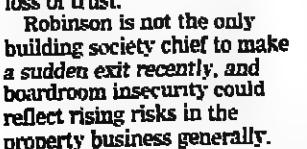
Speculators eye their targets

FT-SE SmallCap Index relative to the FT-SE 100 Index

Year	Index Value (approx.)
1992	100
1993	102
1994	97
1995	93
1996	100
1997	103

	Price Thurs	Change on week	52 week High	52 week Low	
FT-SE 100 Index	3755.6	+58.9	3761.3	3170.2	Takeover speculation
FT-SE Mid 250 Index	4386.3	+68.6	4386.3	3432.8	Takeover speculation
BAT Inds	606	+14	596	438	Recovery from overseas position
Reas	771	+29	773	535	Negotiating to buy Carlsberg-Tetley
Burmah Control	1078	+30	1094	863	Merrill Lynch recommends
Fluorion	721	+72	725	544	Takeover speculation
Fluents	757	+59	729	465	Share buy-back hopes
Shell Transport	862	+13	863	710	Firm of price
TI Group	506	+23	515	355	SBC Warburg recommendation
Tesco	382	+17	336	189	End of petrol price war
Thorn EMI	1790	+117	1649	1093	Bid speculation
United Friendly B	542	+77	542	563	Well-received figures
United News & Media	964	+98	694	498	MAI merger cleared
Wetherspoon (JD)	904	+66	934	460	Company joining FT-SE Mid 250 Index

Bricks and mortar have become volatile assets these days



Investment Property
Database suggest that prices
of offices, shops and industrial
buildings fell across the
country by 4 per cent on
average during calendar-1995

As an investment, real estate has proved very disappointing in recent years. During the 1990s so far, the average annual return on UK

These days, your house could be much like that, too. The tax breaks for homeowners have mostly been

The mess was eventually cleared up by, oddly enough, the Woolwich.

Issued by Thomson Unit
Personal Investment Authority
FEP annual charge of 5%, an ap-
proach to redemption cannot be fe-
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Offshore managed funds and UK managed funds are listed in Section One

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HFC/CL/CL/H/MDA	1.50	2.40	3.50	Min
HCA	4.75	1.80	4.33	Min
HEA 5000 (23,000-)	4.25	3.40	4.33	Min
HEA 5000 (23,000-)	5.00	4.00	5.12	Min
OMMA	3.50	4.40	5.84	Yearly
TDAMA	5.83	4.80	6.50	Yearly
TREMA	5.00	4.72	6.08	Yearly
FOOMA	5.00	4.63	6.17	Yearly

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FTHS

	Share Price	Dividend	Yield
Capital Trust Financial Management			
8-10 South St, Somerset	14.00	0.80	5.71%
NSC Financial Management PLC			
100, Grosvenor Road, London EC2A 3JH	10.00	0.80	8.00%
NSC Financial Management PLC			
100, Grosvenor Road, London EC2A 3JH	10.00	0.80	8.00%
DBS Financial Management PLC			
100, Grosvenor Road, London EC2A 3JH	10.00	0.80	8.00%
Administration	114.0	150.0	
Capital Management	114.0	150.0	
Debt Management	114.0	150.0	
Equity Management	114.0	150.0	
Financial Management	114.0	150.0	
Investment Management	114.0	150.0	
Managing Director	114.0	150.0	
Parliament Trust PLC			
Parliament Trust PLC			
100, Grosvenor Road, London EC2A 3JH	10.00	0.80	8.00%
Administration	114.0	150.0	
Capital Management	114.0	150.0	
Debt Management	114.0	150.0	
Equity Management	114.0	150.0	
Financial Management	114.0	150.0	
Investment Management	114.0	150.0	
Managing Director	114.0	150.0	
Forster & Briffitts Ltd			
3 London Road, London EC2M 5BB	0.171	0.08	
Forster & Briffitts Ltd			
3 London Road, London EC2M 5BB	0.171	0.08	
Forster & Briffitts Ltd			
3 London Road, London EC2M 5BB	0.171	0.08	
Parliament Financial Management PLC			
100, Grosvenor Road, London EC2A 3JH	10.00	0.80	8.00%
Administration	114.0	150.0	
Capital Management	114.0	150.0	
Debt Management	114.0	150.0	
Equity Management	114.0	150.0	
Financial Management	114.0	150.0	
Investment Management	114.0	150.0	
Managing Director	114.0	150.0	
International Services Group			
100, Grosvenor Road, London EC2A 3JH	10.00	0.80	8.00%
Administration	114.0	150.0	
Capital Management	114.0	150.0	
Debt Management	114.0	150.0	
Equity Management	114.0	150.0	
Financial Management	114.0	150.0	
Investment Management	114.0	150.0	
Managing Director	114.0	150.0	
Financial Management PLC			
100, Grosvenor Road, London EC2A 3JH	10.00	0.80	8.00%
Administration	114.0	150.0	
Capital Management	114.0	150.0	
Debt Management	114.0	150.0	
Equity Management	114.0	150.0	
Financial Management	114.0	150.0	
Investment Management	114.0	150.0	
Managing Director	114.0	150.0	
Shaper & Pringleman			
100, Grosvenor Road, London EC2A 3JH	10.00	0.80	8.00%
Administration	114.0	150.0	
Capital Management	114.0	150.0	
Debt Management	114.0	150.0	
Equity Management	114.0	150.0	
Financial Management	114.0	150.0	
Investment Management	114.0	150.0	
Managing Director	114.0	150.0	
Charles Stanley & Co Ltd			
100, Grosvenor Road, London EC2A 3JH	10.00	0.80	8.00%
Administration	114.0	150.0	
Capital Management	114.0	150.0	
Debt Management	114.0	150.0	
Equity Management	114.0	150.0	
Financial Management	114.0	150.0	
Investment Management	114.0	150.0	
Managing Director	114.0	150.0	

FT MANAGED FUNDS SERVICE

● FT Cityline Unit Trust Prices are available over the telephone. Call the FT Cityline Help Desk on (+44 171) 873 4378 for more details.

[illegible]

LONDON STOCK EXCHANGE: Dealings

Details of business done shown below have been taken with consent from last Wednesday's Stock Exchange Official List and should not be reproduced without permission. Details relate to those securities not included in the FT Share Information Service. Unless otherwise indicated prices are in pence. The prices are those at which the business was done in the 24 hours up to 5 pm on Wednesday and executed through the Stock Exchange's Telford system, they are not in order of execution but in ascending order which denotes the day's highest and lowest dealings. For those securities in which no business was recorded in Wednesday's Official List the latest recorded business in the three previous days is given with the relevant date. Bargains at special prices. Bargains done the previous day.

British Funds, etc

Treasury 10% 2000/03 - £124.22

Corporation and County Stocks

London County 2 1/2% Cons 1999/01 after - £124.22 (Apr 6)
Birmingham Corp 2 1/2% Cons 1999/01 after - £124.22 (Apr 6)
Birmingham Corp 3 1/2% Cons 1999/01 after - £124.22 (Apr 6)
Birmingham Corp 3 1/2% Cons 1999/01 after - £124.22 (Apr 6)
Birmingham Corp 3 1/2% Cons 1999/01 after - £124.22 (Apr 6)

UK Public Bonds

Port of London Authority 3 1/2% Port of London A 28/29 - £124.22 (Apr 6)

Foreign Stocks, Bonds, etc (coupons payable in London)

Abney National Treasury 2 1/2% Cons 1999/01 after - £124.22 (Apr 6)
Abney National Treasury 2 1/2% Cons 1999/01 after - £124.22 (Apr 6)
Abney National Treasury 2 1/2% Cons 1999/01 after - £124.22 (Apr 6)
Abney National Treasury 2 1/2% Cons 1999/01 after - £124.22 (Apr 6)
Abney National Treasury 2 1/2% Cons 1999/01 after - £124.22 (Apr 6)

Yield and Interest

Yield and Interest 10% 2000/03 - £124.22
Yield and Interest 10% 2000/03 - £124.22
Yield and Interest 10% 2000/03 - £124.22
Yield and Interest 10% 2000/03 - £124.22
Yield and Interest 10% 2000/03 - £124.22

Sterling Issues by Overseas Borrowers

Bank of Greece 10 1/2% Lns 2000/03 - £124.22
Bank of Greece 10 1/2% Lns 2000/03 - £124.22
Bank of Greece 10 1/2% Lns 2000/03 - £124.22
Bank of Greece 10 1/2% Lns 2000/03 - £124.22
Bank of Greece 10 1/2% Lns 2000/03 - £124.22

Listed Companies (excluding Investment Trusts)

ABF Investments PLC 10 1/2% Lns 2000/03 - £124.22
ABF Investments PLC 10 1/2% Lns 2000/03 - £124.22
ABF Investments PLC 10 1/2% Lns 2000/03 - £124.22
ABF Investments PLC 10 1/2% Lns 2000/03 - £124.22
ABF Investments PLC 10 1/2% Lns 2000/03 - £124.22

British Waterways PLC 10 1/2% Lns 2000/03 - £124.22
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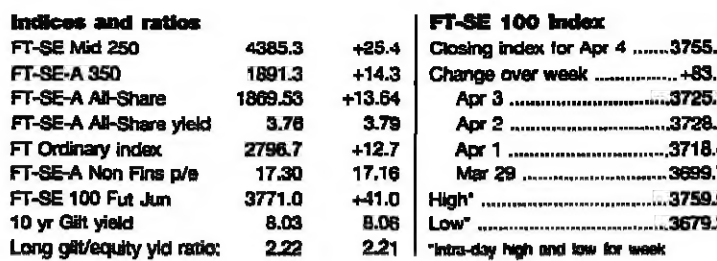
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MARKET REPORT

**By Steve Thompson,
UK Stock Market Editor**

tious about the market, however. In its April equity market analysis document, the strategy team at NatWest Securities said: "The Footsie is bogged down in what is likely to prove the middle of a new trading range of 3,500 to 3,900, which could remain in place for the rest of the year."

Turnover at 6pm on Thursday was 855m shares; customer trading on Wednesday was worth £1.98bn. Business on the London Stock Exchange was a record £68.2bn in February; the previous record monthly turnover, in January 1994 and just before global markets were hit by the sudden upward lurch by US interest rates, was \$63m.



EQUITY FUTURES AND OPTIONS TRADING

Increased activity towards the close helped to boost volume in what had otherwise been an uneventful session in the derivatives, writes John Adams.

In futures, the June contract on the FT-SE 100 closed at 3,771, up 41 from its previous close, though below its fair value premium to cash of about 15 points. The pre-Easter session brought a turnover of 8,630 lots.

In traded option volume, there were 29,565 lots against Wednesday's total of 33,696

contracts. The FT-SE 100 option saw 11,202 lots dealt, while the Euro FT-SE option had business of 1,096 contracts.

Among individual stock options, Reuters, also busy in the cash market, led the way with a total of 2,529 lots. It was followed by Unilever at 2,106 and Tatsefaher House at 1,875 lots.

Other stock options that were active included food retailers J. Sainsbury, Marks and Spencer, British Gas and GEC.

FT-SE 100 INDEX FUTURES (LUFFE) 225 per full index point (AP)

	Open	Sett	Price	Change	High	Low	Est. vol.	Open int.
Dec	3758.0	3771.0	+1.0	3778.0	3736.0	9630	3784	
Mar		3783.0	+1.0				2438	
Jun		3806.0	+1.0			0	31	

FT-SE MID 50 INDEX FUTURES (LUFFE) £10 per full index point

	Open	Sett	Price	Change	High	Low	Est. vol.	Open int.
Jun		4400.0	+20.0			0	0	3519

FT-SE 100 INDEX FUTURES (LUFFE) (3758) £10 per full index point

	3600	3650	3700	3750	3800	3850	3900	3950		
C	P	C	P	C	P	C	P	C	P	
Jan	179	134	127	89	33	25	13	144	1	10
Mar	190	134	127	89	33	25	13	144	1	10
Jun	216	145	132	93	36	27	14	155	2	15
Dec	216	145	132	93	36	27	14	155	2	15
Mar	216	145	132	93	36	27	14	155	2	15

Sett 7/34 Feb 4/34

EURO STYLE FT-SE 100 INDEX OPTION (LUFFE) £10 per full index point

	3575	3625	3675	3725	3775	3825	3875	3925		
Jan	180	115	102	84	67	18	25	32	1	150
Mar	180	115	102	84	67	18	25	32	1	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
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Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
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Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
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Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
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Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
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Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
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Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
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Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
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Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
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Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Mar	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Jun	222	142	132	140	49	36	27	14	15	150
Dec</										

**NEW 52 WEEK HIGH
AND LOWS**

NEED FINANCE?
BANKS, INVESTMENTS [1] Hambro, Brixner
RETAIL [1] AGRI AGRIC, BRIDGESIDE, PULP
BANKS, INVESTMENTS [1] Hambro, Brixner
WOLVERSTON & DUCKLEY, VIEWS Brothers
BUILDING & CROSTON [1] Andrews Sherrill
BANKS, INVESTMENTS [1] Hambro, Brixner
JAMES, MOJAVE [4], PARANORM, ELKS ME
& HICHTS [1] CANADIAN, GARDEN, KINGS
BANKS, INVESTMENTS [1] Hambro, Brixner
ANALYST, DISTRIBUTORS [2] Brammer, I
HEADLINE, MYERS, MOORE, NORTH HARBOR, SHER
PULSED, TAYLOR, COOP, ELECTRIC & ELECT
[1] ASIAN DESIG, PULP, TUNING, ENGINEER
BANKS, INVESTMENTS [1] Hambro, Brixner
EXTRACTIVE INDUS [1] FOOD PRODUCTION
CPI, AERONAUTICS, MENS, HEALTH CARE [1]
BANKS, INVESTMENTS [1] Hambro, Brixner
BILTON & SALTERS, DUNN, INSURANCE
INDEPENDENT INSUR, NELSON HEN, INVEST
BANKS, INVESTMENTS [1] Hambro, Brixner
BOY CONSTRUCTION, CHANDEL GENERAL INC
LEBRUNE & KOTTEL [1] BOOBY & HOWARD
BANKS, INVESTMENTS [1] Hambro, Brixner
MARSHALL UNIVERSITY, OAKS MEAS HOUSE
HUMAN LIFE ASSURANCE [1] UNITED P
BANKS, INVESTMENTS [1] Hambro, Brixner
OTHER FINANCIAL [1] PAPER [1] PAPER
PRINTS [1] SCIENCE INC, DENTS POLYMER
BANKS, INVESTMENTS [1] Hambro, Brixner
[1] HUNTINGTON INC, PROPERTY [1] BARON
CHATELAIN, COMPTON, DURHAM GROUP, FOLLO
NORTHWEST GENERAL [1] SUPPORT SE
TRANSAMER [1] TRANSAMER [1] TRANSAMER
Country Gardens, CYCLO CAR (Sermaco)
AMERICAN [1] AMERICAN [1] AMERICAN
GILTS [1] CHEMICALS [1] ANDER INDUSTRIAL
DISTRIBUTORS [2] HOWARD, WILSON

■ CHIEF PRICE CHANGES THURSDAY		
London (Pence)		
Rises		
£37 Incis	508	+ 20
Blackie Leisure	112	+ 12
Chrystals	464	+ 19
Delta	435	+ 16
Farnel Elect	645	+ 15
Goldsmiths	262	+ 9
Granada	797	+ 22
Hambro Inc	64	+ 10
International Int	351	+ 10
Int of Hardware	545	+ 32
Lakd Group	445	+ 17
London Int	793	+ 20
Martin Int	21	+ 3
Nelson Hurst	198	+ 11
PizzaExpress	344	+ 19
Reuters	757	+ 23
Resam	403	+ 18
Falls		
Bailey (Bar)	27	- 2
Denaltion	47	- 5
Helena	7½	- 2
National Express	491	- 11
Superspace VR	598	- 72

The UK Series

YE	No. of YE	Total Population	1980		Percent Completion	
			High	Low	High	Low
1976	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
1977	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
1978	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
1979	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
1980	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
1981	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
1982	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
1983	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
1984	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
1985	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
1986	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
1987	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
1988	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
1989	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
1990	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
1991	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
1992	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
1993	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
1994	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
1995	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
1996	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
1997	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
1998	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
1999	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2001	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2002	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2003	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2004	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2005	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2006	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2007	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2008	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2009	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2010	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2011	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2012	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2013	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2014	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2015	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2016	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2017	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2018	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2019	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2020	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2021	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2022	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2023	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.00
2024	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	100.00	100.

speculation of an approach
Analysis more sum-

Analysts were cynical although one trader pointed out that the day's turnover of 4.8m shares was at the high end of daily averages for the stock. The shares rose 723p and finished 20 up at 721p, just 4 below the close peak achieved more than a year ago.

Elsewhere, Carlton Communications, the broadcaster, rode 18 higher at 480p on reports that it could make a

ened 3 to 157p following recommendation from Credit Lyonnais Analysts. Analysts are broadly bullish that growth in the market will come from areas. This is a value based investment that will shift one based upon growth."

Granada, which announced the disposal of its Royal Hotel chain, was in favour ahead of the market. The company's shares leapt 22½ to 797p.

Engineering group Laird was supported by a positive note from NatWest Securities. The shares jumped 17 to 445p, making it one of the best performers in the market. The company's squeeze in specialist engineering group Cortworth saw the shares gain 18 at 150p.

Clothing manufacturer

9.00 10.00 11.00

	15.00	14.00	15.00	16.10	Highday	Lowday
15.4	3764.8	3736.6	3757.9	3755.4	3759.9	3724.6
15.7	4390.6	4381.8	4383.6	4364.6	4363.5	4364.7
15.8	1890.5	1891.4	1892.1	1891.2	1892.9	1881.1

10.00 12.00

13.00	14.00	15.00	16.10	Close	Previous	Change
1141.7	1149.3	1141.3	1140.8	1141.3	1139.6	+4.7
4878.7	4891.1	4885.9	4885.4	4885.9	4880.4	+5.5
2165.5	2166.1	2165.5	2163.4	2164.1	2158.1	+6.0
3990.5	4001.7	3998.3	3994.8	3995.2	3971.7	+23.5

P&O drifts

Favourable traffic figures from Eurotunnel boosted shares in the Channel tunnel operator but depressed shares in the shipping, construction and property company.

MARKET REPORTERS:
Peter John, Joel Kibazo,
Lisa Wood.

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Company	Mid Price(p)	Change on Wk (p)	Company	Mid Price(p)	Change on Wk (p)
Advanced Media Grp PLC**	220		Oakhill Enterprises Ltd	2.5	
Anthony Gold PLC	18		Payvision Holdings PLC	3.0	
Armes Village PLC	33		Pe Ma Ho Grp PLC**	11	
Armedex PLC	875000	+2500	Prof Enterprise Grp	138	
Assural Care Centres	40		Progeny PLC	0.5	
Barker Securities	40		Rangers FC	30	+5
Barnham Brown PLC	48		Ratcliffe PLC	2.5	
Bentley Builders	40		Reckitt Benckiser PLC	1.0	

Alphacore Holdings Ltd	22.5	System Science Corp PLC	55
The Faraway Food Company	3.25	Technomic Technologies	128
Barclay Trust PLC	10	Transit Holdings Ltd	9
Craneship Shipping	67	United Business Corp	67
Cranston Hotels	10	Veri-Card Europe PLC *	75
Equity Finance Centre	200	Vision PLC	9
RSB Group PLC *	290	Watermark Group	12
Irish Marine Oil	22	Wheatbale Ltd	2740
Just Group PLC	3	Wellington Mills & Prop	36
Lagardere Group PLC	3	Wells PLC	108
Lean Publishing PLC	113	Wentworth Island Group	11
Malvernair PLC	31	Wentworth PLC	11
Mellor Publishing Corp	48.5	Wentworth & Chydal Partners	455
Metcal PLC	3.4	Wynn Computer Group PLC	11

Prices as at 12 noon on 4 April 1996

* Other classes of shares available.

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